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The Computer Paper

September 2007 Volume 20 Number 09 Free



Getting Graphic



Taking the wide view

More screen real estate
for work and play



In the Lab

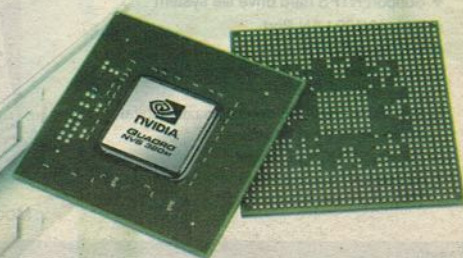
Graphics tablets

Adobe CS3 for:

Photo Gurus

Vanguard Videophiles

Publishing Moguls



Mobile Graphics Powerhouse

nVidia's Quadro GPUs

Raid

RAID ENCLOSURE

For dual 3.5" HDD

- USB mass-storage compliant (USB 2.0 and USB 1.1).
- Configurable RAID function for 2 drives.
- Two 3.5" SATA-I or SATA-II hard drive.

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2 x IEEE 1394 B
(up to 800 Mbps).

For SATA I HDD or SATA II HDD



NAS

HIGH-PERFORMANCE

NETWORK ATTACHED STORAGE

- Flexible connectivity with USB 2.0 and Ethernet port
- Innovative heat sink for heat dissipation
- Store and share files, photos and music
- Easy setup for SMB/FTP server
- Access file from multiple PCs
- LED status indicator



Model : HD9-SU2LAH

For SATA I HDD or SATA II HDD



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Main Functions

- File Server
- Printer Server
- Multimedia Station
- Download Station
- Web Server
- Database Server.
- FTP Server
- Disaster Recovery
- Backup Server
- Mirror Station

Basic Features: (Visit our website for detail and model comparison)

- Support Gigabit LAN.
- Support PHP and SQLite/MySQL to establish interactive websites.
- Easy configure/management for access right for users and user groups.
- Support access from either windows PC or MAC for centralize management of documents
- Different FTP account can be setup for customers and colleagues to access file from remote location
- Support BitTorrent download. Download tasks, priority, port number download, upload rate configuration available.



Model : TS-201,
TS-209,
TS-209 Pro.



Model : TS-100
Model : TS-101,
TS-109,
TS-109 Pro.

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MINI-NAS Barebone System

MEDIAGATE

The Digital Media Player Use 3.5" Hard Drive

MG-35 is A advance hard drive digital media player with network function available on the market.

Features:

- Support NTFS hard drive file system
- With 10/100 LAN Port
- Support USB 2.0 slave
- Support composite, S-video, component video outputs
- Support stereo L/R, optical/coaxial digital audio, analog 5.1 channels
- Support JPEG still picture
- Support file surfing from multiple sources on TV using a remote controller.



Model : MG-35 NDAS

MG-350HD is one of the most advance hard drive HD digital media player with build-in wireless network function ready on the market.

Features:

- Support NTFS hard drive file system
- Support 10/100 wire lan, 11g wireless lan
- Support USB2.0 slave/host
- Support composite, S-video, component video outputs
- Support stereo L/R, optical/coaxial digital audio, analog 5.1 channels
- Support HDMI/DVI video output
- Support file surfing from multiple sources on TV using a remote controller.



Model : MG-350HD

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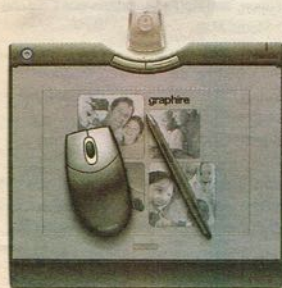
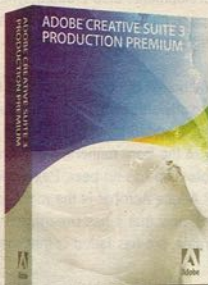
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Notice anything different?

Believing that actions speak louder than words, HUB: Digital Living becomes HUB: The Computer Paper with neither pomp nor ceremony. It's a return to the TCP and HUB legacies that together have spanned more than 20 years. What's changing? The name and the size are the biggest things. The name change brings us more in line with our readers and the industries we cover. The new format gives us more room to do so... along with a few extras like the comprehensive ISP listings and info on tech training institutions. We think it's an idea whose time has come again, and we'd love to hear your thoughts at letters@ppublishing.ca.

In this first redesigned issue we are highlighting the computer as a graphics instrument. For those of you whose computer experience or memory doesn't go back more than a couple of decades, you may be wondering what the big deal is. With a current Mac or Windows PC, high-quality graphics and colour are a standard part of the package. This means even when using inexpensive or free applications like OpenOffice Writer, you can design documents that look pretty sweet.

But it was not always so. Up until the mid-1980s, personal computing was a dreary, character-based monochrome environment. Computer graphics meant crude pictures made by creating patterns with alphanumeric characters - and even that was considered leading edge in its day. Real graphics work was done on specialized (expensive) workstations using specialized (expensive too) software. Then the Apple Mac happened. And the Apple LaserWriter happened. And Adobe developed a little thing called PostScript. Oh, and scalable fonts. And Aldus Corp. introduced an application called PageMaker, which allowed you to put text and graphics on the same page - what a concept. These were the key enablers of what was to become the desktop publishing revolution. It has driven a lot of the personal computer's development and so today even a mid-range platform offers a powerful foundation for professional graphic artists as well as dabblers. These developments also created synergies with other things that people were discovering they could do on a computer - like play or compose music, edit video or manipulate photographs. Throw in a fast, fat way to join in on the Internet and you have our present computing environment.

Today, Apple still has the mindshare and heartspace of graphics types (although of course, Windows has the walletspace of most computer buyers), while Adobe has become the fat cat of graphics software, swallowing up virtually every graphics software title worth owning. With Adobe's acquisition of Macromedia in 2005, it added to its stable some of the best titles for web development, including Flash and Dreamweaver. So now, if you want any of the front runners in any graphics sub-category, you'll likely be drinking deep at the Adobe fountain. Want bitmap graphics? Photoshop has no peer. Page layout? InDesign has steadily loosened Quark's stranglehold on professional DTP. Document workflow? Adobe Acrobat is the main game. Web development? Adobe seems to have forgotten about its own GoLive (also an acquisition), now that it has Dreamweaver, ColdFusion, Flash, etc. And for vector graphics, CorelDraw used to be able to stand up to Illustrator, but has faded in that marketing race.

There are a few pockets of resistance. The best natural media application is Painter, which was acquired by Corel several years ago. Adobe's Premiere Pro video editing suite gets knocked around some by the competition, and Apple Quicktime goes on and on. And Adobe doesn't have anything in the 3D space to compete with products like 3D Studio Max.

Adobe is managing its diverse and extensive holdings in graphics software by mixing and matching the titles into variations under the Creative Suite umbrella. So, there is not one Creative Suite 3 title you can buy, but three variations (in standard and premium versions), along with an all-encompassing CS3 Master Collection. This issue devotes a good chunk of editorial real estate to CS3 because it is a significant product - and one that touches so many graphics endeavours.

One of my first jobs that involved both computers and editing was working on manuscripts that were computer typeset. We had to code each change in font with tags, much like HTML is hand-coded today. I remember one distressing instance where someone forgot to put in the end tag for a subtitle, so pages of the body copy of the manuscript came back from the typesetter in large bold type. I sure don't miss those good ol' days.

Enjoy the issue.
David Tanaka,
Editor

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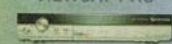
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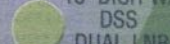
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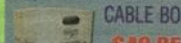
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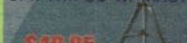
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NEC/Sony AD-1770A 18x DVD±RW DL w/software.....35.9
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Plextor PX-800 18x DVD±RW w/software.....87.9
Plextor PX-760 18x DVD±RW w/software.....114.9
Samsung SH-S182F 18x DVD±RW Dual-layer w/software.....28.99
Samsung SH-S182M Lightscribe 18x DVD±RW w/software.....34.9
Sony AW-Q170A Dual layer 18x DVD±RW software.....32.9
Sony AW-G170S S-ATA 18x DVD±RW D.L.w/software.....36.9
Blank CD Writable/Rewritable.....0.29/1.9
Ritek Ridata 80Min 700MB 50 Pack Retail box.....13.99
Precision 4X DVD-R 4.7G 25Pack Retail Box.....6.99
Ritek Ridata DVD-R 8X/Printable.....0.39/5.0
Ritek Ridata DVD Layer 8.5G.....3.99
Ritek Ridata 6X DVD-RW.....2.49

KEYBOARD/MOUSE

Keyboard PS2 BenQ P010/Multimedia.....\$5.99/8.99
Fujitsu Keyboard 8729/4726.....18/58
HP 5302H USB Multimedia Keyboard w/2 USB port.....16
Logitech Multimedia Keyboard/Black.....15/17
Logitech Premium desktop(KB+w/less mouse).....34.99
Logitech Deluxe 250 Desktop Combo(KB + Mouse).....17.9
Logitech Optical Wheel Mouse.....9.99
Logitech G5 Laser Gaming Mouse.....46.9
Logitech G7 Laser Gaming Mouse.....79.9
Logitech Cordless G15 Gaming Keyboard.....86.9
Logitech Cordless MX 5000 Bluetooth KB & Mouse.....125
Logitech Cordless Keyboard + Optical Mouse.....36.9

CPU/MEMORY

Sempron AM2 3200/3600+.....\$39.9/49.9/55.9
Athlon64 AM2 3200/3500/3800.....64.9/74.9/89.9
AMD Athlon64x2 AM2 4000/4200/4800.....79.9/92.9/129.9
AMD Athlon64x2 5200/5600/6000.....149.9/169.9/194.9
Celeron-S775 2.66/2.83/3.0/3.46G.....45.9/52.9/59.9/78.9
Pentium Dual Core E2140(1.6G)/E2160(1.8G).....84.9/105.9
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Core 2 Duo E6320(1.86G)/E6420(2.13G).....184.9/212.9
Core 2 Duo E6600(2.4G)/E6550(2.33G).....249.9/196.9
Core 2 Duo E7600(2.66G)/E6850(3.0G).....219.9/309.9
Core 2 Duo Q6600(2.4G)/QX6850(3.0G).....309.9/1099
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PC-133 SDRAM 16 chips 128/256M.....27.9/38.9
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DDR2 PC5400 256M/512M/1.0G.....24.9/42.9
OCZ DDR PC3200 2G(2x1G)Dual-channel kit.....139.9
OCZ DDR2-667MHz PC5400 1G dual-channel kit.....54.9
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OCZ PC6400 2.0G Gold edition Dual-Channel kit.....129
Kingston PC3200 256/512M/1.0G.....29.9/39.9/69.9
Kingston PC5300 DDR2 512M/1G.....31.9/52.9
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Apacer MP3 Player 1G w/SD expansion slot.....29.99
Apacer Au822 1.0G MP3 Player w/Video/FM.....49.99

DIGITAL CAMERA

Canon A460/A550/A560.....\$159/185/239
Canon A570i/A630/A640.....285/285/399
Canon SD40/SD750/SD800s.....374/345/419
Canon SD900/SD1000/S3iS5i/G7.....459/285/419/509/599
Canon camcorder DC210/DC230/DC50.....459/545/789
Canon camcorder ZR800/ZR850/HV100.....349/419/1129
Casio EX-S770/EX-Z75.....309/219
Casio EX-Z1050/EX-V7.....269/319
Olympus FE210/FE230/FE240.....179/225/186
Olympus S760/S770/S780/SP500.....265/419/375/559
Olympus E410/E410K2/E510K.....729/839/929
Sony DSCW35/DSCW55/DSCZ20P.....219/239/329
Sony DSCZ7/DSCZ100/DSCN2.....449/419/369
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Compact Flash 75x 2G/4G.....41.9/64.9
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Secure digital 150x 2.0/4.0G.....38.9/74.9
Secure digital Mini 1.0G/2.0G.....19.9/39.9
XD-Picture Card 1.0G/2.0G.....37.9/52.9

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Systems come with 3 years labor, 1 year part warranty; option of 1 month free internet access. All new systems are tested & burned-in for 48 hours before shipping. Financing and leasing are available. Prices reflect a 3% cash discount and are subject to change without notice. Price effective Sep.01 - Sep.30

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AMD Athlon64 X2	4800+/5200+	\$549/579
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(NVIDIA nForce 430, RAID, Dual Channel)
512MB DDR2 RAM
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All-In-One Memory Card Reader
Nvidia GeForce 6300 Video Card O/B
Open PCI-Express 16x Slot
LG H54N 18x DVD+RW Dual Layer Drive
6 Channel 5.1 Sound Card O/B
BenQ P010 PS/2 Keyboard
Logitech Optical Wheel Mouse
17" P4-ATX USB2.0-Front Case
10/100Mb Ethernet O/B
Speakers w/Headphone Jack
17" LG L1752TX LCD 1400:1 DVI

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AMD Sempron64	3200+/3600+	\$489/509
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All-In-One Memory Card Reader
NVIDIA Quadro NV210S Graphics/DVI O/B
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Asus M2N-X AM2 Mainboard (NVIDIA nForce 5, RAID, Dual Channel) 1.0GB PC5400 DDR2 RAM 250GB S-ATA2 Hard Drive All-In-One Memory Card Reader NVIDIA GeForce 7300GT PCI-E 256MB/DVI LG H54N 18x DVD+RW Dual Layer Drive 6 Channel 5.1 Sound Card O/B BenQ P010 PS/2 Keyboard Logitech Optical Wheel mouse 17" P4-ATX USB2.0-Front Case 10/100Mb Ethernet O/B OG-1015 Speakers w/ Subwoofer 19" LG L194WXTX Wide Screen LCD (5ms, 2000:1, Dual Analog/Digital)	\$489/509
Asus M2N-X AM2 Mainboard (NVIDIA nForce 5, RAID, Dual Channel) 1.0GB PC5400 DDR2 RAM 250GB S-ATA2 Hard Drive All-In-One Memory Card Reader NVIDIA GeForce 7300GT PCI-E 256MB/DVI LG H54N 18x DVD+RW Dual Layer Drive 6 Channel 5.1 Sound Card O/B BenQ P010 PS/2 Keyboard Logitech Optical Wheel mouse 17" P4-ATX USB2.0-Front Case 10/100Mb Ethernet O/B OG-1015 Speakers w/ Subwoofer 19" LG L194WXTX Wide Screen LCD (5ms, 2000:1, Dual Analog/Digital)	\$639/659
Asus M2N-X AM2 Mainboard (NVIDIA nForce 5, RAID, Dual Channel) 1.0GB PC5400 DDR2 RAM 250GB S-ATA2 Hard Drive All-In-One Memory Card Reader NVIDIA GeForce 7300GT PCI-E 256MB/DVI LG H54N 18x DVD+RW Dual Layer Drive 6 Channel 5.1 Sound Card O/B BenQ P010 PS/2 Keyboard Logitech Optical Wheel mouse 17" P4-ATX USB2.0-Front Case 10/100Mb Ethernet O/B OG-1015 Speakers w/ Subwoofer 19" LG L194WXTX Wide Screen LCD (5ms, 2000:1, Dual Analog/Digital)	\$699/729
Asus M2N-X AM2 Mainboard (NVIDIA nForce 5, RAID, Dual Channel) 1.0GB PC5400 DDR2 RAM 250GB S-ATA2 Hard Drive All-In-One Memory Card Reader NVIDIA GeForce 7300GT PCI-E 256MB/DVI LG H54N 18x DVD+RW Dual Layer Drive 6 Channel 5.1 Sound Card O/B BenQ P010 PS/2 Keyboard Logitech Optical Wheel mouse 17" P4-ATX USB2.0-Front Case 10/100Mb Ethernet O/B OG-1015 Speakers w/ Subwoofer 19" LG L194WXTX Wide Screen LCD (5ms, 2000:1, Dual Analog/Digital)	\$749/769

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Asus M2N-X SLI AM2 Mainboard (NVIDIA nForce 5 SLI, RAID, Dual Channel) Transcend 2GB PC6400 DDR2 Dual Channel Kit 320GB 7200RPM SATA2 16MB Hard Drive All-In-One Memory Card Reader NVIDIA GeForce 8600GT PCI-E 256MB/DVI LG H54N 18x DVD+RW Dual Layer Drive 8-Channel 7.1 Sound Card O/B Logitech Deluxe 250 desktop combo (Keyboard + Optical Wheel Mouse) 17" P4-ATX USB2.0-Front Case Gigabit Ethernet/1394 Firewire O/B Altec Lansing VS3251 5.1 Speakers w/Remote 19" LG L194WXTX Wide Screen LCD (5ms, 2000:1, Dual Analog/Digital)	\$889/919
Asus M2N-X SLI AM2 Mainboard (NVIDIA nForce 5 SLI, RAID, Dual Channel) Transcend 2GB PC6400 DDR2 Dual Channel Kit 320GB 7200RPM SATA2 16MB Hard Drive All-In-One Memory Card Reader NVIDIA GeForce 8600GT PCI-E 256MB/DVI LG H54N 18x DVD+RW Dual Layer Drive 8-Channel 7.1 Sound Card O/B Logitech Deluxe 250 desktop combo (Keyboard + Optical Wheel Mouse) 17" P4-ATX USB2.0-Front Case Gigabit Ethernet/1394 Firewire O/B Altec Lansing VS3251 5.1 Speakers w/Remote 19" LG L194WXTX Wide Screen LCD (5ms, 2000:1, Dual Analog/Digital)	\$939/959

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ASUS P5SD2-X/PS5D2-MX-SE/PSB-Premium	\$79/69.9/234
ASUS P5B-VM-SE/PSB/PSB-E	119.9/128/164
ASUS P5K-SE/PSK-Premium-WF	128.9/252.9
ASUS P5K-DX-WF/PSK3-DX-WF	241.9/274.9
ASUS P5K/PSK-WF/PSK-WS	153.9/158/254
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ASUS P5L-MX/PSL2/PSB-E-SLI	89.9/99.9/142.9
ASUS P5N-SLI/PSN32-SLI-Premium	109/239.9
ASUS P5N32-E-SLI/PSN64-WF-Pro	204.9/248.9
ASUS P5W-DH-Deluxe/PS5D2G2-WS-Pro	208.9/298.9
ASUS Sinkier NF800-S	328.9
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ASUS M2V-MX/M2V	72.9/89.9
ASUS S939 A8N5X/A8N32-SLI-Deluxe	99/179
ASUS 945GZT-M/945P-A3-0	78/89.9
Foxconn 760GX/MC-RS/K8M890-M2MA	69/79
Foxconn 865GTM/945P7AA-BK52	69/99.9
PC Partner 915PAST-A47 915 chipset Firewire	.89
Gigabyte GA965P-DS3/S3	144/115
Gigabyte GAP35-DS3R	159.9
Gigabyte GAM57SLI-S4/GAM595SLI-S5	124/209
MSI P35-NEO-F/965 Platinum	125/159.9
MSI K9N Neo-F/K9A Platinum	95/159
MSI K9N-Diamond/K9N-SLI-Platinum	199/145

MOTHERBOARD

Acer LCD 17" AL1706AB/L1717BMB	\$174.9/194.9
Acer 19" LCD AL1916AB/L1917VAB	214.9/188.9
Acer 20" AL2017BMD/L2016W	235/205.9
Acer 20" Ferrari F20 800:1 8ms DVI w/speaker	454.9
Acer 22" AL2216WBD/L2223WD	272.9/304.9
Acer 26" AL2616WBD/37 AT370A	715.9/1249
Acer LCD TV 42" AT4220A 1366x768 8ms DVI	1429
Daytek LCD Touch Screen 15"/17"	599/769
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Samsung 19" 940N 8ms 700:1	234.9
Samsung LCD 930C	289
Samsung LCD 941B W Analog/DVI 6ms 700:1	219.9
Samsung LCD 20" 2058W w/HAS 6ms 700:1	254.9
Samsung LCD 22" 2258W 5ms 700:1	314.9
Samsung LCD 27" 275T 1000:1 6ms	1054.9
ViewSonic 17" VA1703WB/19" VA903B	198.9/249.9
ViewSonic 19" VA1903WB/VA1912WB	214.9/219.9
ViewSonic LCD 19" VP930WB/V930W	359/249
ViewSonic LCD 19" VX1945WM/VX922	279/259
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MONITOR

MODEM

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D-Link 24 Port DES-1024R	134.9
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D-Link 48 Port DES-3550 10/100 Plus 2 Giga port	758.9
Linksys WRT54G 54Mbps wireless G router	.69
Linksys WRT54GS Speed Boost wireless router	.92
Linksys wireless PCI card WMP54G/WMP54GR	65/84
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CAT5e Cable 50/75/100/1000ft	9/12/15/75

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Brother 240C/440C/3360/665CW	\$128.9/184.9/129/254
Canon IP1300/3300/4300/5300	58.9/99/154/199
Canon IP6700D/Printer/9000/IP490	199.9/669.9/294.9
Large format IPF5000/6000/4000/IPF8000	2129/3719/5899
Large Format IPF5000/IPF6000/IPF7000	1539/2349/4049
Canon MP-160/460/510/600/830	69.9/99.9/184/264/349
Canon MFC 3240/4150/6530/8180C	189/299/669/859
Canon Scanner 4400/8600F/LIDE25	155/244.9/89
Epson C88/1400/R1800	99/399.9/549.9
Epson CD printer R260/380/800/2400	118.9/145/455/859
Epson CX4450/5000/6000/7000F	84.9/104.9/128.9/128.9
Brother Laser HL-2030/2040	89/159
Brother HL 2070N/2700CN/5250DN	189/559/289
Brother 2700CN Color Laser 2400x1200 dpi	549
Okidata Color Laser C3200N/C5500N	279.9/629
Okidata Color Laser C5800LDN/C6000N	829.9/789
Okidata Color Laser C6100N/C6100DN	939.9/1289
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HP LaserJet 1018 laser Printer 1200dpi	89.9
Samsung Laser 2010/3051DN/3561N	109/289/619
Brother Toner TN 250/350/460/560	19.9/54/54/59
Canon Toner w/Drum EA40/A30/S35/FX-3	69/69/54/54
HP Toner w/Drum C7115A/C7115X/Q2612A	49/54/59
HP Toner w/Drum C92298A/C9303A/C4092A	49/49/49
Panasonic Toner FA76/UG3331/UG3350	19.9/75/75
Samsung Toner w/Drum ML1610D2/110T/1710D3	59
Samsung Toner Drum SF4500/SF5100/SCX4216D3	59
Samsung Toner Drum SCX-4521D3	69

SOFTWARE

McAfee VirusScan 2007 Plus	\$15.9
(McAfee AntiVirus/Scan 2007 + Software Firewall + AntiSpamware)	
McAfee Internet Security Suite 2007	19.9
Norton Antivirus 2007	24.9
Norton Internet Security 2007	34.9
(Norton Antivirus + Software Firewall + Anti-Spam + Anti-Popup)	
Norton Ghost 10.0.	58.9

SOUND/SPEAKER

PowerData PCI Sound Card 3.1/5.1	\$14/19
Creative SB Audigy SE 7.1	32.9
Creative SB X-Fi Xtreme Sound	52.9
Creative SB X-Fi Xtreme Gamer	99.99
Creative SB X-Fi Xtreme Gamer Fatality Pro	148.9
Creative SB X-Fi Platinum Fatality Champion	189.9
Creative SB WM6000 Wireless Music Pack	139
OG-1015 w/wireless/2pc Speaker	196
Altec Lansing VS3251 5.1 Spk. w/Wireless remote	49.9
Altec Lansing FX4021/FX5051/FX6021	129/219/215
Edifier 5.1 Spk M1500R251	
Logitech X540/X230	79.99/48.9

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80G/160G/250G	\$49.9/59.9/74.9
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Asus PCI-E EAX1950Pro w/256M/HDP/DVI-TV-out	179.9
Asus EAH2900XT 512M 512bit PCI-E Dual DVI	458.9
Asus PCI-E Silent 256M EN7600GS/8800GTS	109.9/199.9
Asus EN8800GS 320M/400M	339.9/429
Asus 7600GS EN8800GT/8800Ultra	629/739
ATI Radeon 9550 w-TV-out/DVI/256M	59.9
ATI X1600Pro TV-out DVI PCI-E 256M	84.9
ATI X1600Pro AGP TV-out DVI 256/512M	79.9/128.9
ATI X1600XT Ultimate PCI-E 256M DDR3 DVI	99.9
ATI X1650Pro AGP TV-out DVI 256/512M	129/138.9
ATI X1950Pro PCI-E DDR3 DVI 256M/512M	158/174
ATI X1950Pro AGPx8 512M DDR3 TV-out DVI	198
ATI X1950XT PCI-E 256M, VIVO, DVI	215
ATI X2900XT 512M	424.9
eVGA AGP 6200 AGPx8 128M TV-out	42.9
eVGA AGP 6200 AGPx8 256M TV-out DVI	59.9
eVGA PCI-E 7200GS TV-out DVI, 256M/512M	44.9/52.9
eVGA PCI-E 256M 7300GT/7600GS	65.9/94.9
eVGA PCI-E 7600GT 256M DDR3 TV-out/DVI	125.9
eVGA AGP GF7600GS 256M TV-out DVI	118.9
eVGA PCI-E GF8500GT 256M, TV-out, DVI	89.9
eVGA 8600GT 256M DDR3 DVI TV-out	131.9
eVGA 8600GTS 256M DDR3 DVI TV-out	189.9
eVGA PCI-E 8800GTS 640M/8800GTx 768M	415/589.9
eVGA 8800GTS 320M DDR3 DVI TV-out	315.9
eVGA E-GeF8800Ultra 768M	684.9
Forza PCI-E 8600GT 256M DDR3 TV-out DVI	129.9
Gigabyte 8800GTS 320M	339
Gigabyte 8800GTx 768M	379
Leadtek GF7600GT PCI-E 256M DDR3 TV-out/DVI	129
Leadtek GF7950GT PCI-E 512M w-TV-out/DVI	269
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USB Fridge

File under utterly useless, but entirely awesome USB widgets. The USB Fridge from DreamCheeky is a novelty USB powered drink cooler. The "fridge" part of the title is a little misleading; essentially, it's the same technology as the USB Beverage Chiller from Canadian company CoolIT Systems with a retro-styled plastic enclosure.

You're limited to standard pop cans; no bottles of water, no king cans or anything that won't fit inside the enclosure. For this trade-off, however, you get one of the nifty blue LEDs that often grace the more interesting USB peripherals; this one in the form of a light inside the fridge. At about US\$30, available from www.usbgeek.com, you might find yourself wondering why you didn't just drink your pop while it was cold in the first place though.



Canadian doctors decidedly low-tech

A recent study released by the Conference Board of Canada suggests that North American physicians are among the most low-tech of the developed world. Canada and the United States are practically interchangeable in last place in areas like digitization of patient records, workflow and Internet use. The report, titled "Exploring Technical Innovation in Health System," suggests that despite the stereotype of indecipherable handwriting, a majority of doctors' offices in Canada prefer the old-fashioned approach of hand-written notation on hard-copy charts and paper filing systems. According to the study, less than a quarter of Canadian doctors' offices use digital patient records. What's even stranger is the fact that only about 65 percent identify themselves as Internet users.

While our physicians may be behind the curve where

technology is concerned, they publish considerably more articles than doctors in other countries, with 714 published articles per million as compared with the 527 per million average. View the report at www.conferenceboard.ca (registration required).

Panasonic launches "Globarange" hybrid cordless phone

Panasonic has released a hybrid 5.8 GHz cordless phone for people interested in VoIP, but not yet willing to give up their landlines. Called Globarange, this "transitional technology" allows you to send and receive calls using whichever line you prefer – your traditional landline or VoIP service provided by joip. This means you can still enjoy the benefits of having a landline – useful during power outages, for operating a fax machine and traditional 911 service – while avoiding huge long distance bills by utilizing those low-cost VoIP rates.

The Globarange phone is easy to set up. All you have to do is plug in the power cord, your landline and your Ethernet cable (high speed Internet is required for the VoIP line to work). You don't have to install or download any software, or even turn on your PC. No contract is necessary, as the purchase of a Globarange phone includes three years of unlimited calls to and from any other Globarange user in the world.

If you want to make calls to landlines or cell phones using your VoIP line, you will have to sign up for a monthly plan, as this costs you minutes. (Minutes also apply when you receive calls to your VoIP line from landlines or cell phones.) Plans range from \$6.99 per month (for a pay-as-you-talk service) to \$24.99 (2000 minutes to the US and Canada).

Features such as Call Waiting and Caller ID are included free with joip. However, Voice Mail, Conference Calling and Call Forwarding are considered "advanced" features and will cost you. You can plug a traditional answering machine into the Globarange phone as an alternative, or purchase the high-end model (\$179.95) that includes a digital answering system.

The Globarange phones hit stores at the end of August, with the BB-GT1500B base model starting at \$129.95. The phones are currently available in 10 countries: U.S., Hong Kong, Brazil, Spain, Germany, Austria, UK, Ireland and Australia.

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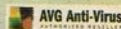
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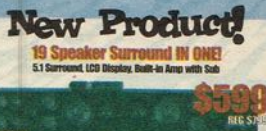
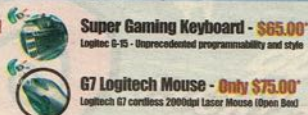
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Packing heat

HUB tests three notebook backpacks with sizzlin' style

Business folk like to haul their portable PCs in expensive attaché cases, and stylish technorati typically obsess over messenger bags and shoulder totes, but the most practical and ergonomic means of transporting a notebook—preferred by students, cyclists and urban hikers—is the backpack. These double-strapped shoulder bags are better for your back and can typically store a lot more than just a notebook and a few papers. And, if you choose carefully, they can be surprisingly easy on the peepers. We checked out three laptop packs that give backs a break and provide their wearers little need to fear the fashion police.

Targus Revolution www.targus.com/ca **(\$100)**

If you can't decide whether you'd like a messenger bag or a backpack, the Revolution might be worth a look-see. The spacious laptop compartment (fits screens up to 15.4 inches) detaches from the rest of the pack and

Targus Revolution



has its own padded shoulder strap, allowing users to travel light when necessary. It's a great solution for people who need a backpack for the bike ride to work or school and a lighter, sleeker tote as they port their notebooks to meetings or classes throughout the day. The extra material makes the Revolution a bit bulkier than competing laptop backpacks, but it's a fair trade given the pack's unusual utility. The only real bummer is a lack of additional pockets in the tote—it's a pretty basic bag meant to stow little more than a notebook. (Oh—and the backpack's beige and brown motif, while pretty, requires a wardrobe composed mostly of earth tones, assuming you don't want to clash with your bag.)

Samsonite Pro DLX www.samsonite.ca **(\$165 medium, \$210 large)**

If durability is a factor and price isn't a concern, renowned luggage designer Samsonite's Pro DLX is the notebook backpack to beat. Constructed with heavy duty nylon fibres, the Pro DLX can take a serious beating without tearing or even showing signs of wear. The interior laptop compartment, which can fit notebooks up to 15 inches, provides plenty of padding as well as a strap designed to keep computers from shifting in transit. Available in black or brown with attractive orange accents and leather finishes, the Pro DLX is at home in business environments. Adding to

Samsonite Pro DLX



the professional vibe is a practical design that sports far fewer outer zippers and compartments than the norm for the backpack genus, lending it an efficient, minimal appearance.

lululemon Terrain www.lululemon.com **(\$89)**

Backpacks designed by lululemon, a rapidly expanding Vancouver-based athletic clothing company, focus on comfort, practicality, style and providing an easy way to lug your...yoga mat...around town. That's right: in addition to dedicated pockets for notebooks, iPods and PDAs, the Terrain is also designed to make transporting your yoga gear on bike or foot a piece of cake. Hipsters will appreciate the pack's funky little details, including pictures of items meant to be stored in each compartment found on their corresponding zipper tags, while owners of pricey notebooks will welcome the smartly designed laptop sheath, which opens from the side to allow notebooks to be inserted lengthwise. Once stowed, laptops sit comfortably flat against the wearer's back and on an elastic band that keeps them slightly elevated and protected against the impact of short drops.

By Chad Sapieha

lululemon Terrain



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Pre- and Post-Production in a box

Adobe Creative Suite 3: a premium offering for video production professionals

It is being called the single largest software release in the company's history – and it's one of the most anticipated.

As such, it's also one of the most expensive – listing at \$1,699 – and most resource intensive: the minimum recommended drive space just to load the program is 23.5GB. A bare minimum 1GB of RAM is required to get the most from the software, as is a Pentium 4 1.4 GHz processor.

With these caveats aside, it is great news – Adobe's new Creative Suite 3 Production Premium Suite (one of three new CS3 bundles, the other two focused on graphics and Web work) is now available.

Of course, Adobe includes a whack of applications critical to the dedicated videomaker – Premiere Pro for editing, Encore for DVD authoring, After Effects for compositing and VFX creation, Photoshop for touch-ups and image manipulation and Illustrator for text and vector graphics creation. One could be happy and content right there, but the company has also added other interesting and intriguing media apps to the suite: the familiar Flash, Soundbooth (a task-based tool that replaces Audition), OnLocation (formerly known as DV Rack) and Ultra CS3 (a chromakey and virtual set tool).

These last two apps come to Adobe by way of its acquisition of Serious Magic, a great little digital media company. Luckily, these unique programs have only gained from the transition.

Adobe's well-known strength in bringing a consistent look and feel to its interface is evident throughout this new

release, and also in its integration of what were once Macromedia (also acquired by Adobe with integration in this release) and Serious Magic assets. Let's look at the core programs first.

Premiere Pro CS3

Save for the fact this popular video editing program has returned to the Mac, it has not undergone many changes. Given the fact that the previous version, Premiere Pro 2, was a somewhat disruptive release, perhaps that's for the better.

It is still a powerful and sophisticated editing program, capable of handling DV and HD, among other video formats. It can still output finished programs to tape, disc, mobile device or Internet stream.

And there are some cool new features. Handling HDV files is much smoother and more accurate with Premiere Pro CS3. You can also now open different bins at the same time, making transfer of captured video or other files easier to move, copy and paste between bins.

Previews can be enabled or disabled, too, which is handy if you have lots of clips that need rendering and you don't want to wait for Premiere to update all of those files on the timeline. Just click on the icon and Premiere will disable previews.

New as well is time remapping, a feature that lets you create variable-rate time stretches directly in the timeline; you can now see the clip getting longer or shorter, depending on the clip speed that you choose.

Time remapping has been available in

After Effects for a while, but now it's in Premiere. Speed changes are keyframeable, and a soft "ease in or out" command brings a nice sense of realism to things that get slower or faster over time.

Encore CS3

With the new Encore, you can author standard DVD titles, Blu-ray discs and even Web-based Flash presentations much in the same way that you always have – fully menu-driven, with linked chapters, customized buttons and a fully-interactive and user navigable interface. Blu-ray is becoming increasingly popular as a distribution medium, and anyone with a Sony PlayStation 3 or compatible player can watch your burned disc.

Encore does allow you to create visual and editorial effects right on the timeline, and it gives added slow motion and time-remapping effect control with precise keyframe placement and real-time feedback. You can add colour correction, lighting and other effects, audio filters and so on. As has been one of its video strengths in Premiere, Encore now accepts edited footage from multicam shoots with ease and precision.

By the way, perhaps because of a lot of this functional overlap, Encore will no longer be available by itself.

Soundbooth CS3

Previous Adobe video bundles included Audition, Adobe's professional audio-editing application (formerly known as Cool Edit Pro). Soundbooth is a simpler,

one-click-and-you-are-done audio processing software.

Soundbooth is well-designed for video editors with little or no experience in audio (you know who you are if you say "louder" instead of "normalizing"). The application is powerful, but the interface is very graphical and uncomplicated.

With Soundbooth, trim, fade and volume controls are really simple to use, and so are the audio cleanup features. Soundbooth shows other tabbed functions on the left side of the screen – you simply choose the function that you want (audio cleanup, score creator, etc.).

The new Spectral view is great for cleaning up unwanted frequency-specific noises from audio clips (cough, cell phone, 60 cycle hum, etc.). You can literally "see" the sound on screen, and quickly eliminate it (and any others like it).

Needless to say, you can access Soundbooth from within Premiere Pro, simply by right-clicking an audio clip and choosing Edit in Adobe Soundbooth > Render and Replace. This will open a copy of the clip in Soundbooth, leaving the original untouched.

After Effects CS3

Adobe went all out in the new After Effects CS3 version. New features like Shape Layers and the Puppet Tool make it the crowning achievement of this release to some eyes.

Using the new Puppet Tool is a hoot! It lets you to add "pins" or points to a still layer that you can then use to animate different parts of the layer. "Dancing"

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text, animated objects, motion graphics and much, much more can be created simply and easily.

After Effects CS3 also supports the new video layers in Photoshop CS3 Extended (more on that later), which makes roto-scoping inside of Photoshop and re-importing into After Effects easy and intuitive.

Vanishing point is an important new feature in After Effects. It lets you work with Photoshop to create planes on a still image for applying 3D animation. It works especially well with images of buildings, for example, where the 2D planes are easily identified and then exported to After Effects, where a fully 3D composition of your still is ready to be animated with a keyframe technique.

Also new is the ability to animate and replicate vector graphics in order to create cool backgrounds and graphic elements. Folks who have worked in Illustrator know how exciting this is. Shapes, layers, animation and more can be added across resolutions and to each individual parameter that a graphic file includes.

Photoshop CS3 Extended

Because Photoshop has been out for a couple of months and is covered elsewhere, we'll just mention some new video-centric features.

As usual, Photoshop is at the heart of the enhanced integration features in CS3 Production Premium. Regardless of the primary editing or composition appli-

cation you use, Photoshop remains a constant in the video/print/web world.

Photoshop imports video; After Effects reads this video. Send a DVD menu directly into Photoshop or After Effects for animation or editing, and bring it back into Encore DVD for authoring, seamlessly and without rendering.

In this release, Photoshop's new Movie support app lets you retouch videos one frame at a time (great for roto-scoping!), with a familiar After Effects-like interface. There's also lots and lots of support for video and compositing applications (like After Effects, as discussed earlier).

Flash

One of the most exciting additions to the Production Premium is Flash CS3. For those of you who don't know Flash, it's an application designed for (among many other things) delivery of content through the Web, or even interactive (computer-play only) DVDs. Flash has a market penetration of more than 96 percent on computers that are used to browse the Internet, so almost everyone with a computer is capable of playing Flash files.

You can now export Flash video with markers or cue points that trigger a specific event while your Flash video is playing. Graphics, subtitles, another video clip - you name it! You can easily update your whole presentation just by updating that one file, not the whole video. You can also copy and paste

from Photoshop and Illustrator directly into Flash and retain the layer styles.

Ultra CS3 (Windows only)

Ultra CS3 is another application formerly owned by Serious Magic and now integrated into the Adobe suites. It's used for easy and accurate chromakeying and virtual-set compositing. This release, available for Windows only, doesn't change much from the Serious Magic version, but it brings some great new functionality to the Production Premium suite.

For those of you who do not know Ultra, this product lets you key backgrounds, even those encumbered with wrinkles and uneven lighting. Of course, Ultra supports all standard DV and HDV resolutions.

OnLocation CS3

Formerly known as DV Rack from Serious Magic, OnLocation is a powerful diagnostic and monitoring tool for recording DV and HDV content directly from a FireWire-equipped camera to a laptop or hard drive.

OnLocation displays (on your laptop's screen) valuable diagnostic information about your video clips, including Zebra displays and help with White Balance, Safe Zones, Scopes, Audio levels, camera calibration and more. It does not affect the video, but it carefully measures and monitors it, giving you greater confidence on location. You can start and stop record, log clips and write

scene names, descriptions and so on.

OnLocation can also be used to help match shots from one location to another or one day to a different day through scope comparisons and measurements, making post production efforts (especially colour correction and audio) that much easier.

To use OnLocation on a Mac, you will need the BootCamp platform transcoder.

On the way out: CS3 Media Encoder and Device Central

You can now use Adobe Media Encoder (Premiere Pro, After Effects, Soundbooth and Encore DVD) to export your work for a wide variety of audiences and target devices, with newly included support for 3GPP and H.264 content. There's also a new Device Central preview feature, letting you see you a realistic preview of how your particular file will look in a specific cell phone (or iPod, or whatever).

Taken together, Adobe Creative Suite 3 Production Premium is a powerful set of video tools, intended for the professional or working videographer. Hobbyists and weekend warriors will probably be better served by "scaled down" versions like Premiere Elements and Photoshop Elements. But if you make a living from video, or if you intend to, this suite is the way to go.

By Lee Rickwood

Adobe Premiere Pro edit screen





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A new face for InDesign CS3

With the previous version, InDesign CS2, I felt this integration was quite far

Thus, at any given time in InDesign,

PDF workflow has become a central part of the pre-press workflow for many printing houses, and InDesign's "export to PDF" is a delight to use. The first time I tried this, I was also sending files to a printer that I'd never dealt with before, so I made PDFs of just a couple of pages using InDesign's presets for offset press and emailed them to the pre-press guy, thinking that I would have to make a lot of fine tuning adjustments before I got it right. A short email back said that the only thing I needed to change was to set the bleed to a quarter inch all around. (I'd set it at an eighth of an inch.) That done, it took just a few minutes to export the 32-page magazine supplement to PDF, and a few minutes more to FTP the PDF to the printer's computer. Anyone who's worked in page layout when you had to "package" the file (which meant making sure every little piece of artwork and every font was included in the files you sent to the printing house) will know what a dramatic simplification PDF workflow is, and why print houses have embraced it. And with InDesign, creating a printer-ready PDF is no more difficult than sending a copy of your pages to your laser or inkjet printer for proofing.

For Intel-based Mac users, perhaps the most welcome news is that InDesign CS3 (and the whole CS3 suite) is a universal binary application so it will run full tilt on Intel- as well as PowerPC-based Macs.

By David Tanaka



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Graphics gone mobile

Quadro NVS Mobile GPU

nVidia's family of graphics processors for notebooks share a common architecture, but provide a range of performance to suit your need for speed and your pocket book.

Late last year, Microsoft released Windows Vista, which included many new, but unfortunately resource-heavy, technologies. A couple of months ago, Intel launched its latest revision to the Centrino Mobile brand (dubbed Santa Rosa), further alleviating the performance concerns surrounding Vista while also leveraging many of its most advanced functions. Around the same time, nVidia brought its new business-focused mobile GPUs to the market as

well. Not surprisingly, these new GPUs are completely compatible with the Santa Rosa chipset and are designed specifically for Windows Vista.

The great thing about the Quadro NVS Mobile series is that there is one available in every price category and all of them are based on the same architecture. What this means for the consumer is that while the various Quadro NVS GPUs have different performance levels, because they share the same DNA - they include the same major features. For example, if you're a CAD professional or 3D animator, it would be worth the additional cost of purchasing the high-end Quadro NVS 510M with 512MB of

dedicated video RAM. On the other hand, if you're only planning to use your notebook for word processing and spreadsheets, but still want to use nVidia's award-winning nView multi-display technology, it would be more cost effective to go with the entry-level Quadro NVS 110M with only 64MB of dedicated video RAM.

Regardless of which Quadro NVS you choose, you're going to get the same vivid graphics, functionality and features with the only noticeable difference being the clock speed and memory configurations. The following are some of the highlights present in all of the new mobile Quadro NVS GPUs.

Application Compatibility Testing and Unified Driver Architecture:

As with the previous generations of Quadro GPUs, nVidia has tested the Quadro NVS hardware and drivers with a wide array of today's leading business applications in order to ensure complete compatibility. The tested applications range from everyday software like McAfee Virus Scan and MS Office, to more specialized software like Hummingbird Exceed and Bloomberg. Furthermore, because the Quadro NVS uses nVidia's Unified Driver Architecture, continued compatibility and stability are assured with future updates (or at least, that's the intention).

PowerMizer 7.0:

PowerMizer is nVidia's trademark intelligent power management system that adaptively adjusts the GPU on the fly to reduce power consumption. Along with dynamically altering the GPU and memo-

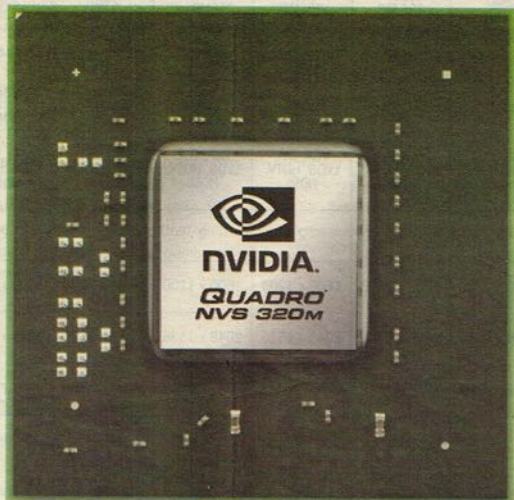
ry clocks, PowerMizer can also shut down inactive portions of the GPU to increase battery life. With other features like SmartDimmer (actively adjusts the screen brightness) and On-Chip Power "Watchdog" (circuitry dedicated to monitoring GPU utilization in order to throttle appropriately), the Quadro NVS Mobile GPUs offer much better battery life than previous generations.

DirectX10 and OpenGL 2.1 Optimization:

DirectX 10 is the graphics API used to power the more advanced visuals of Windows Vista. The entire Quadro NVS line of GPUs fully supports DX10 and Shader Model 4.0 to offer the most impressive graphics currently possible. Full support for OpenGL 2.1 ensures compatibility with a robust OS-independent graphics API as well as all OpenGL applications. Most of the visual improvements offered by DX10 and OGL2.1 are more noticeable in graphics heavy applications (3D animation software, CAD programs, video/photo editing), but the performance improvements when running things like AeroGlass in Windows Vista should be apparent to every type of user.

PureVideo HD:

Another important feature of the Quadro NVS series is the PureVideo HD video engine. PureVideo HD is a complete suite of hardware accelerated HD video decoders used to smooth, scale, de-interlace and colour correct HD video playback. H.264 and VC-1 (the codecs used by Blu-Ray and HD-DVD) are also supported to improve HD video disc



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playback as well. The PureVideo HD video engine not only allows for better playback of all video, but also lightens the processing load on the main CPU, which further improves battery life.

nView Multi-Display Technology:

Rounding out the Quadro NVS features is nVidia's nView multi-display technology, which is vital for any business-centric notebook. With two 400MHz RAMDACs, HDCP compliance and support for a multitude of video outputs (composite, s-video, component, HDMI, VGA, DVI), the Quadro NVS offers the most fully-featured external and multiple digital or analog display support. Using the nView software makes setting up multiple displays easy and custom hotkeys makes switching between display configurations as simple as clicking a button.

Unlike a lot of other dedicated graphics solutions that tend to focus solely on increasing performance, many of the new features of the Quadro NVS line help increase battery life. Not only is the Quadro NVS able to adjust its own power consumption based on usage, it can also be used to offload many power-hungry tasks from the system CPU, which saves battery life due to the GPU's increased efficiency (e.g. HD video playback). As the portable PC market continues to experience drastic growth, mobile graphics hardware like the Quadro NVS line becomes increasingly important. The ability to produce desktop-level performance while maintaining excellent battery life is the key to increasing mobile productivity in graphics-heavy tasks. Add to that the fact that there is a Quadro NVS available in every price point (from budget to high-end) and nVidia really seems to have outdone themselves with their latest crop of business-centric GPUs.

By Mike Palermo



There are currently eight different versions of the Quadro NVS, each of which has at least two different memory size/configurations. While the large variety of Quadro NVS solutions may seem daunting, the following chart gives a quick and easy-to-read breakdown of each GPU. Of particular interest is the Quadro NVS 140M; it is the fastest Quadro NVS GPU that manages to use only 10W of power (meaning longer battery life and ultraportable compatibility).

	NVIDIA Quadro NVS 510M	NVIDIA Quadro NVS 320M	NVIDIA Quadro NVS 300M	NVIDIA Quadro NVS 140M	NVIDIA Quadro NVS 135M	NVIDIA Quadro NVS 130M	NVIDIA Quadro NVS 120M	NVIDIA Quadro NVS 110M
Memory Size	256/512MB	128/256/512MB	128/256/512MB	128/256 MB	128/256MB	128/256MB	128/256/512MB	128/256/512MB
Memory Interface	256-bit	128-bit	128-bit	64-bit	64-bit	64-bit	64-bit	64-bit
Bus Interface	PCI Express x16	PCI Express x16	PCI Express x16	PCI Express x16	PCI Express x16	PCI Express x16	PCI Express x16	PCI Express x16
Display Connectors	VGA, DVI, LVDS, HDTV, HDMI	VGA, DVI, LVDS, HDTV, HDMI	VGA, DVI, LVDS, HDTV, HDMI	VGA, DVI, LVDS, HDTV, HDMI	VGA, DVI, LVDS, HDTV, HDMI	VGA, DVI, LVDS, HDTV, HDMI	VGA, DVI, LVDS, HDTV, HDMI	VGA, DVI, LVDS, HDTV, HDMI
Max Displays per Board	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Max. Digital Display Support	1600 x 1200	1600 x 1200	1600 x 1200	1600 x 1200	1600 x 1200	1600 x 1200	1600 x 1200	1600 x 1200
Max. Analog Display Support	2048 x 1536	2048 x 1536	2048 x 1536	2048 x 1536	2048 x 1536	2048 x 1536	2048 x 1536	2048 x 1536
Power & Cooling	35W - Active	20W - Active	16W - Active	10W - Passive/Active	10W - Passive/Active	10W - Passive	10W - Active	10W - Passive
nView Enabled	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NVIDIA TurboCache™	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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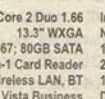
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Through the viewfinder

A photographer's take on Adobe Photoshop CS3

As digital photography evolves, the trend in digital editing has been towards providing the photographer with a workflow: selecting and transferring images from a camera or card reader, sorting and organizing them, then editing them for various outputs including prints and posting on the web. While Adobe Photoshop has been the industry's premier graphics editor for years, it has lagged behind other products such as Aperture and Lightroom in providing the photographer a complete workflow and ease-of-use features specifically focused on photography rather than graphic arts.

Consequently, each successive release of Photoshop has seen Adobe add additional or improved features related specifically to digital photography. Photoshop CS3 offers a strong list of new and improved features designed to help professional and advanced amateur photographers develop a workflow

and take image preparation to its maximum potential. There are two versions of Photoshop CS3: Standard CS3 and CS3 Extended. Photoshop CS3, which is the focus of this review, is the basic upgrade from CS2. CS3 Extended includes advanced features for those working with videos and 3D applications. Those features will not be discussed here.

For Mac users, Photoshop CS3 now runs Intel-native code, allowing Intel-based Macs to run the program faster and more stably than CS2. Performance improvements are not limited to Macintosh, however. CS3 code has been optimized, improving performance on Windows machines as well and the performance enhancements also extend to Adobe Bridge.

Adobe CS3 Bridge

There are three programs in the Photoshop CS3 suite that work together

to provide a digital photography workflow: Bridge, Camera Raw and Photoshop itself. The starting program of the workflow suite is Bridge, a stand-alone application that works faster and better than the CS2 version. It contains a downloader for transferring images from camera or card reader to your computer, and highly customizable options for viewing them and making culling decisions. You can nuke the bad shots and rank the good shots, rename the images in various ways and save them to disk in two different locations if you wish, such as a main drive and backup drive for safety. You can add metadata, such as your name, copyright information and keywords to all the images prior to transferring them. CS3 Bridge includes a new Loupe tool that lets you magnify parts of an image from 100 percent to 800 percent to check on critical sharpness. Bridge can also be used to batch convert images to other sizes and formats.

Adobe Camera Raw

Adobe Camera Raw, or ACR as it's often abbreviated, provides the foundation of a digital photography workflow. This core program, as the name indicates, converts a camera manufacturer's RAW files into a format that can be viewed and edited. ACR is used to make global adjustments to an image or set of images. In CS3, this

has been extended to TIFF and JPG format as well. Despite its intuitive and easy-to-use interface, ACR packs a whopper. Its feature set is so rich and powerful that entire third-party books are available on squeezing out its full potential.

At its most basic level, ACR can be used to adjust colour temperature, tint, exposure, brightness and contrast. Its 'Recover,' 'Fill Light' and 'Blacks' sliders work like the Shadow/Highlight tool in Photoshop, helping bring back detail in underexposed dark areas and trimming back highlights in overexposed light areas. A new 'Vibrance' slider works as a kind of 'Smart Saturation' tool, making some colours more vibrant without disturbing others. The traditional Saturation slider is present as well. The greyscale conversion in ACR resembles the greyscale conversion in Lightroom, with multiple tonal sliders. With ACR, you can prep your images (including batch adjustments) to be optimized before they reach Photoshop for final polishing.

One of the most interesting features of the Photoshop CS3 suite is Photoshop's new ability to handle files as 'Smart Objects.' When a photo has been adjusted to your satisfaction in ACR, you can now open it in Photoshop in this new non-destructive mode, further applying 'Smart Filters' to the photo. The flow from ACR to Photoshop can

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Adobe Camera Raw

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now resemble the non-destructive workflow of Aperture or Lightroom.

User Interface

A first look at the Photoshop component of the CS3 suite is startling - the user interface has been dramatically altered and simplified. Palettes are now contained in special docks that can be expanded and contracted, and the toolbar on the left has been shrunk to a single column located at the left border. This allows more space for the images as you work on them - a welcome change. Palettes can be torn off the dock and floated on the screen or combined with other palettes, and for anyone who finds the change too drastic, the interface can be switched back to 'classic' mode. I liked the new interface as soon as I saw it. It's intuitive, attractive and the larger image working area is an improvement.

Small Enhancements

Let's start with some of the little improvements that might interest experienced Photoshop users: top on my list is the refined Curves tool. It now features a histogram behind the graph and a black-and-white slider under the graph, similar to Levels. There are a number of new presets available such as 'Cross Process', 'Darker', 'Lighter', 'Medium Contrast' and 'Color Negative.' An advanced control lets you to work in percentages of ink/pigment rather than light. A less obvious update has happened to the previously lame Brightness/Contrast tool. It's finally a simple way of adjusting brightness and contrast that doesn't mess up the distribution of values in your image. The 'Channel Mixer' tool has sprouted six new presets: infrared, plus blue, green, orange, red and yellow filters. The infrared filter doesn't make anything look remotely like infrared, to my eye, but the others are useful starting points.

Black and White

For years, I've been perfecting my ability to convert digital colour images to convincing B&W in Photoshop. There are dozens of techniques and approaches to B&W conversion, and they may have all just been rendered unnecessary by CS3's new Black-and-White Conversion tool - an addition that was likely borrowed from Adobe Lightroom. I've been pitting this tool against my honed techniques from previous releases of Photoshop, and I haven't been able to significantly improve upon it. Worse, it's easy. Forget all the pain and esoteric knowledge - Adobe got it in one with this new addition. It's just plain good.

The Black-and-White tool is available both as a basic tool and as an adjustment layer. It offers 10 presets: Blue Filter, Green Filter, High Contrast Blue Filter, High Contrast Red Filter, Infrared, Maximum Black, Maximum White, Neutral Density, Red Filter and Yellow Filter. The tool itself has sliders for Reds, Yellows, Greens, Cyans, Blues and Magentas. By customizing the sliders, you can achieve very sophisticated tonal adjustments. You can also tint your B&W's and control the saturation of the tint. And did I mention it's easy? If this tool doesn't tempt you to create sumptuous B&W images, stick with red and yellow tulips.

Quick Selection and Refine Edge

If you've ever wished for a Magic Wand tool that really worked, or at least worked better, you'll find it in the new Quick Selection tool. Just click the tool on something in your photo and drag, pressing left bracket and right bracket to decrease or increase the size of the brush. It can do most of the selection work for you, relatively accurately. Then click the Refine Edge tool to finesse the selection, all the while previewing the results in a number of optional ways. At

last, you can preview the effects of feathering - something that had previously been a trial-and-error procedure. The Quick Selection won't help with very delicate, fine detail, but it gets you into the ballpark in a hurry. If you've been reluctant about extensive selecting in the past, this addition may spur you onto trying some photocompositing - creating an image from bits of several other images.

Easier Compositing

Auto-Align Layers can align layer elements based on similarities, such as corners and edges. It can be used for compositing elements from several layers to create a photomontage, or to create panoramic images from several images. One such use for this, outlined in the CS3 online help, is for group portraits in which one person blinked. If there's another shot with the person not blinking, it can be used to replace the blinking person in the otherwise good group shot.

Improved 32-bit HDR

Photographers who strive to achieve High Dynamic Range photos by combining different shots of a subject taken with different exposures will find a few improvements in 32-bit editing and Merge to HDR. 32-bit images can contain layers with layer masks and certain filters. In addition, a 32-bit image can be retouched with updated versions of core tools such as Brush, Pencil, Blur, Sharpen, Gradient, Smudge and Pattern Stamp. Merge to HDR can now store response curves for each of the cameras you shoot with.

Smart Filters

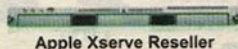
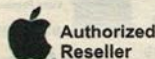
Compared to some of the newer photo editing and workflow products on the market, such as Aperture and Lightroom, Photoshop has lagged in the area of non-destructive editing.

Photoshop is catching up with its new Smart Filters that let you add, adjust and remove filters from an image without having to resave the image or start over to preserve image quality. As with Lightroom modules, you can apply filters to visualize changes and experiment with an image without altering original pixel data. Unfortunately, not all filter effects can be used on 16-bit images, but all are available while editing 8-bit images.

Bottom Line

Although Adobe Photoshop CS3 Standard is an expensive program (\$740 or \$240 for an upgrade), it easily retains its status as the premier photo editor of the industry. For any photographer working seriously with layer adjustments, fine selections, composite images, and extensive third-party plug-ins, Photoshop has no peer. The CS3 version has brought welcome improvements and spruced-up workflow options. Nonetheless, for many photographers, these features are overkill. If your photographic needs are simply to get image files sorted and organized, adjusted a bit in terms of contrast, tone and tint, and sharpened a little for printing, then a dedicated digital photography workflow suite such as Aperture or Lightroom may be a more appropriate product for you. If you need some, but not all, of the layer-based features of Photoshop, then Photoshop Elements (\$130) may meet your needs. But for photographers who consistently draw on its deep set of features, Photoshop CS3 is the best Photoshop yet.

By Gene Wilburn



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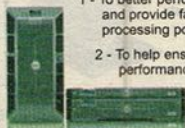
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Technology, the pen and tablet interface is a much more natural interface than the traditional mouse. Using a mouse generally only engages muscles in the wrist and can lead to issues related to overuse. A pen and tablet interface requires the use of the entire arm and is therefore a more natural way to interact with the PC. The study is, conveniently enough, archived on leading tablet maker Wacom's website (www.wacom.com/comfort/ErgonomicStudy.pdf).

Pen and ink style

Aside from the obvious benefit of a more natural, pen-like interface for artists and graphics professionals, the biggest benefit that graphics tablets offer is the sensitivity of the pen. When using a mouse to create, users must manually adjust brush sizes and pressure (opacity) in whatever graphics program they are using.

Graphics tablets remove the step and rely on the actual physical pressure put on the pen to determine the coverage of virtual ink on the virtual page. For example, when using the airbrush tool in Photoshop, a light touch will result in lighter coverage, while a heavier touch will lay the paint on thicker.

Cheap-o tablets sometimes offer as little as 256 degrees of pressure sensitivity. The defacto minimum for a truly usable tablet is 512 degrees with most recent tablets going beyond, doubling the sensitivity to 1,024 points.

Products

Wacom is the industry incumbent where graphics tablets are concerned. While other brands offer competitive products and even more competitive pricing, Wacom has the benefit of a wider product line and a big portfolio of add-ons to draw from. The company's airbrush stylus uses the same technology as the touch pen, but gives a much more refined control when using a software airbrush; a rolling wheel emulates the feel of a real airbrush with tilt sensing and a rolling wheel to control the amount of digital ink going on the virtual page.

Other add-ons include a cross-hairs mouse for use in CAD applications and Wacom's Tool ID, allowing users to assign a unique code to each tool and program how it should perform.

Wacom Graphire Bluetooth 6 x 8 Tablet
www.wacom.com

Estimated price: \$300

Wacom's Graphire Bluetooth 6 x 8 Tablet is a wireless addition to its

Specifications

- Tablet Dimensions: 25.7cm x 28cm x 2.3cm
- Active Area: 15.1cm x 20.9cm (5.94 x 8.22 inches)
- Pressure Levels: 512
- Interface: Bluetooth Specification 1.2 with adaptive frequency hopping
- Battery: Rechargeable Lithium Polymer, 3.7V, 1800mAh
- Bluetooth Class: Class 2 for up to 30 feet wireless working distance

System Requirements:

- Win2000/XP or Mac OS v10.2.8+ with Bluetooth 1.1 (or higher)
- CD-ROM Drive
- Colour Monitor
- Colour Eflex Pro 2 GE Requires Adobe
- Photoshop Elements 2.0 (included) or Photoshop 7.0 or higher

already well-received line of tablet interfaces. It works anywhere you'd typically use a mouse and allows for refined control in supported graphics applications.

With a 25 hour lithium polymer battery, the Bluetooth tablet doesn't just swap one wire for another (the USB cable for a power cord) and allows for truly wireless use. The tablet can, of course, be charged and used at the same time, but that ruins the whole wireless desktop thing.

Using Bluetooth 1.2, the tablet can be up to 30 feet away from the monitor in optimal conditions. In normal use though, it won't find its way more than a few feet from the monitor.

The 6 x 8 inch (3:4 aspect ratio) will work with, but is not optimized for, widescreen monitors.

Wacom Intuos3 6 x 11 Wide-Format USB Tablet

www.wacom.com

Estimated price: \$500

Nearly doubling the price from Wacom's Bluetooth offering, the Intuos3 6 x 11 Wide-Format USB Tablet is optimized for wide-screen monitors and dual-monitor desktops, giving a much more representative workspace.

Soft keys at the top of the tablet, above the active area, can be programmed using the included software to run program-specific macros or to launch software. For example, in the Windows desktop, hitting one of the keys might launch a portion of the Adobe CS3 suite. Within Photoshop,

(Virtual) pen and ink in Vista

All versions of Windows Vista except the Home Basic flavour offer much improved native support for tablets. Building upon the foundation laid by Microsoft's Tablet PC push, a whole world of possibilities has been opened to tablet users in Vista and in Office 2007. Some of the revamped tablet support includes:

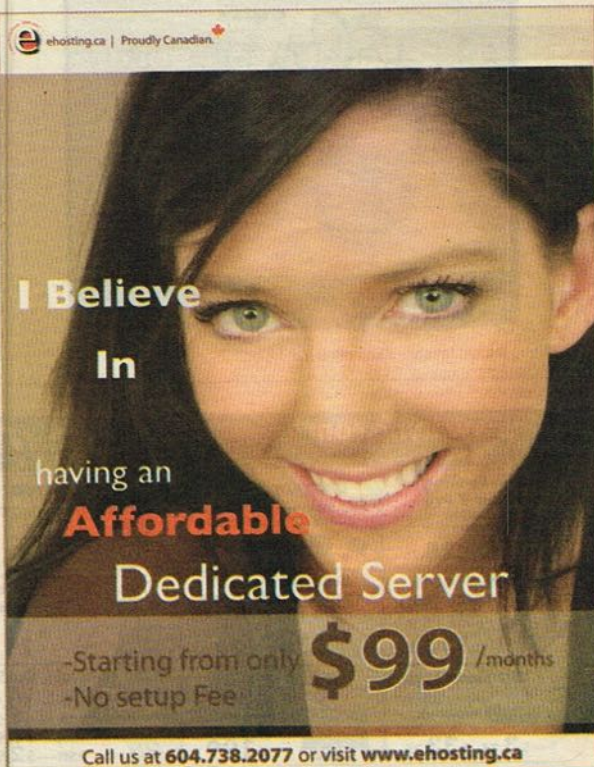
Note Taking – Microsoft Journal is an application exclusively for the benefit of users working with a pen tablet, interactive pen display or Tablet PC. Journal simulates a physical notebook, but with all the advantages of a digital medium. The pen can be used in Journal to jot notes and capture quick sketches, providing valuable collaboration options for use at home, school and work. Journal also incorporates a powerful search engine that can even locate handwritten content.

Handwriting Recognition – Vista introduces intelligent handwriting recognition as a natural supplement to keyboard input. This new recognition technology efficiently and accurately converts a wide variety of handwriting styles into typed text. For example, during a brainstorming session, a pen user can scribble down ideas and sketch concepts for collaboration with colleagues. The user has the option to share the information in handwritten form or convert it to typed text. In addition, the eraser end of a compatible pen automatically activates an eraser tool to quickly and easily remove mistakes.

Gestures – There are a variety of pen gestures available within Vista that enable users to navigate faster and that enhance the overall computing experience. Flicks offers eight customizable gestures with actions determined by the user and Scratch Out allows pen users to delete text automatically with a scratching motion of the pen over the targeted text.

Digital Ink in Office 2007

Microsoft Office 2007 and a tablet offer new capabilities that allow users to work more naturally and efficiently. Office 2007 applications such as Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint and OneNote running on Vista all support digital mark-up with a tablet and pen, and the user interface provides easy access to digital inking tools for intuitive collaboration. Users can select a pen or highlighter tool to mark-up documents, spreadsheets, presentation slides and email messages.



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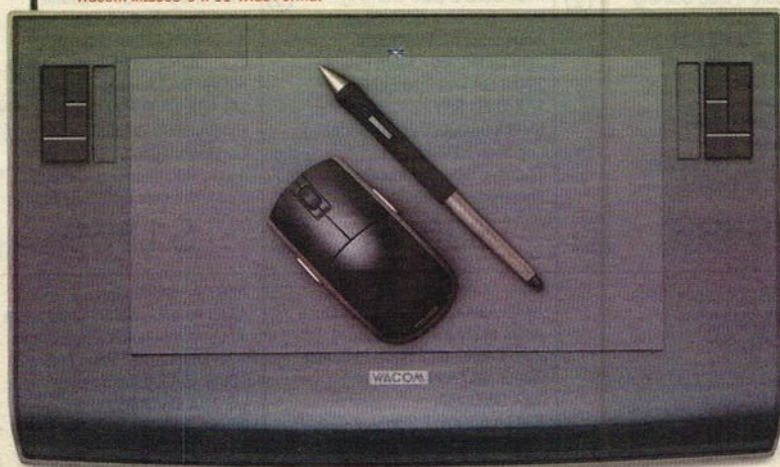
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Wacom Intuos3 6 x 11 Wide-Format



low end of the tablet scale; 4 x 5 tablets like Wacom's Graphire4 4 X 5 can be had for about \$120.

Smaller tablet and pen interfaces are also widely available in independent computer and component retailers, but these are focused on creating a more natural text input method for Chinese, Japanese and Korean character sets and offer neither the refined sensitivity nor the software support for graphics programs.

Shifting aspect ratios

The biggest change to hit graphics tablets has been the shift from 4:3 to widescreen aspect ratio monitors (see Marc Saltzman's story on page 38 for a look at some recent entries into the widescreen monitor category). While dual-monitor desktops—offering a much wider desktop than a traditional 4:3 monitor—are nothing new, the shift to widescreen format monitors for graphics professionals has opened the market for widescreen format tablet and pen interfaces. While a standard aspect tablet will still work and will take care of mapping the screen area to the tablet's surface, a wide format tablet will offer a much higher degree of accuracy with a wide format or dual-monitor set-up.

New connections

In the move from the slow and clumsy serial port interface to the faster, plug-and-play, self-powered USB connection, graphics tablets—among a great many other desktop products—have reaped the benefits. Recent new additions to the tablet tableau use Bluetooth as the connection method, removing another wire from the desktop and making it even easier to share a tablet between multiple users and multiple computers. For all their convenience, Bluetooth tablets add about \$100 to the price when compared with a similarly equipped, non-Bluetooth device.

Ergo, go ergo

Tablet interfaces have found their way into ergonomic office set-ups, too. Some sufferers of carpal tunnel syndrome or other repetitive stress disorders have reported finding a measure of relief when using a pen and tablet in their everyday computing. According to a study by Global Ergonomic

Whether you're a graphics artist with a bit of departmental budget to burn, an ergonomics-obsessed office drone, a digital darkroom aficionado, an evil editor looking to lay the red ink on someone's prose or somewhere in between, graphics tablets deserve a once-over.

For one, they're less expensive than they once were. They've moved from being the exclusive domain of the professional graphics designer or prosumer, requiring the precision that only a pen can provide, to the advanced amateur or hobbyist. There are also ergonomic considerations that could lead your family doctor to prescribe an entirely different kind of tablet than usual.

Graphics tablets function a lot like the touch-sensitive pad often found on laptop PCs, but offer a degree of accuracy many times greater. In part, because rather than dragging a finger across a small pad, users have pin-point (or at least, pen-point) accuracy on a surface many times larger than a mouse touch pad; and in part, because said pen is constantly communicating with the tablet, telling it not just where it is on the X,Y axis, but how much pressure is on the nib that controls how much ink is laid down on the virtual page in graphics applications that support tablets.

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The latest in a line of iMacs

The iMac's history has been a colourful one. From the original iMac that introduced new colour concepts to the desktop—from blueberry to tangerine—to the desk lamp-looking next generation incorporating LCD display technology, the super glossy white all-in-ones in 17-inch and 20-inch sizes with a 24-inch white iMac introduced in

September 2006 and now, the matte aluminium casing and ultra glossy glass screen of the latest iMac. Apple has done away with the 17-inch option; the new iMacs are available in 20-inch and 24-inch configurations only. Costing between \$1,299 and \$2,449, the latest iMacs come in a good deal cheaper than their predecessors (respectively). The new iMacs continue on the pre-stated Apple path, using cheaper Intel chipsets that allow users—with a little fiddling around—to have a dual-boot machine with Microsoft's near ubiquitous Windows running next door to Apple's own OS X operating system.

20-inch 2.0 GHz iMac \$1,299

- 2.0 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor
- 1GB of 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM expandable to 4GB
- Slot-loading 8x SuperDrive with double-layer support (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- ATI Radeon HD 2400 XT with 128MB GDDR3 memory
- Built-in iSight video camera
- Built-in AirPort Extreme 802.11n wireless networking and Bluetooth 2.0+EDR
- 250GB Serial ATA hard drive running at 7200 rpm
- mini-DVI out
- Built-in stereo speakers and microphone
- The new Apple Keyboard, Mighty Mouse and infrared Apple Remote.

20-inch 2.4 GHz iMac \$1,499

- 2.4 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor
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- Built-in iSight video camera
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- The new Apple Keyboard, Mighty Mouse and infrared Apple Remote.

24-inch 2.4 GHz iMac \$1,899

- 2.4 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor
- 1GB of 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM expandable to 4GB
- Slot-loading 8x SuperDrive with double-layer support (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- ATI Radeon HD 2600 PRO with 256MB GDDR3 memory
- Built-in iSight video camera
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- 320GB Serial ATA hard drive running at 7200 rpm
- mini-DVI out
- Built-in stereo speakers and microphone
- The new Apple Keyboard, Mighty Mouse and infrared Apple Remote.

24-inch 2.8 GHz iMac \$2,499

- 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor
- 2GB of 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM expandable to 4GB
- Slot-loading 8x SuperDrive with double-layer support (DVD±R DL/DVD±RW/CD-RW)
- ATI Radeon HD 2600 PRO with 256MB GDDR3 memory
- Built-in iSight video camera
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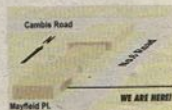
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*Some restrictions apply. Please call for details.



Introducing the new iMac

The all-new, all-in-one iMac packs a complete, high-performance computer into a beautifully thin design. Available in 20- and 24-inch widescreen models, it includes built-in wireless, Mac OS X, and the new iLife '08. So within minutes of opening the box, you'll be doing everything from sharing photos to creating movies to building websites. And it starts at just \$1299.

Now you can order Mac accessories online @ <http://www.dmac.ca>



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Specifications

- Tablet Dimensions: 41.9cm x 26.2cm x 1.5cm
- Active Area: 15.2cm x 27.9cm (6 x 11 inches)
- Pressure Levels: 1,024
- Interface: USB
- Battery: N/A

System Requirements:

- PC or Mac running Windows 98SE/2000/Me/XP or Mac OS 10.2.6 or higher
- Powered USB Port
- CD-ROM drive
- Colour monitor
- Colour Efex Pro 2 IE requires Adobe Photoshop Elements 3 (included) or Photoshop 7 or higher

one key can be programmed to incrementally increase or decrease brush size or switch to a commonly used tool.

With 1,024 points of sensitivity, users get a much more refined level of control over virtual brush, airbrush etc. pressure. As with other Wacom tablets, the package includes a battery-free wireless mouse (that must be used atop the tablet, not independently on the desk) and the pen is likewise battery-free.

A finger-sensitive touch strip works much like a laptop's touch pad and can be used to control zooming or scrolling.

Adesso CyberTablet Z12 10 x 6

Widescreen Tablet

www.adesso.com

Estimated price: \$300

With a wide-screen format, 1,024 levels of pressure sensitivity, wireless pen and programmable hot keys, Adesso's CyberTablet Z12 gives the industry's incumbent Wacom a run for the money. The CyberTablet Z12 doesn't include a

wireless mouse in the package; for anyone that's used a tablet before, however, this likely isn't a big deal. Rather than being something that's sorely missed in the package, it's just one less piece of useless plastic to store in the drawer; the add-on mice that come with graphics tablets tend to be of questionable worth.

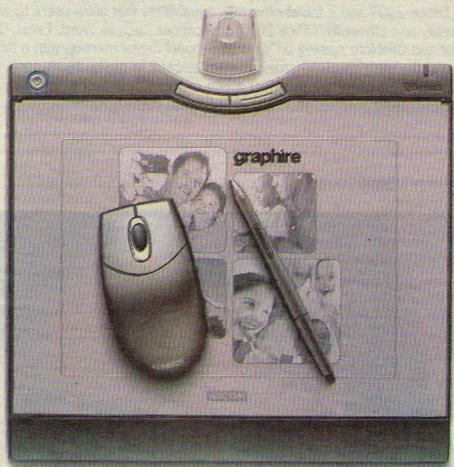
Twelve pre-programmed hot keys (new document, save, undo along with email, browser buttons and so on) look after common tasks in graphics and other applications. Down each side of the tablet's active drawing area sit eight programmable keys that can be mapped to commonly used functions so that users can stash the keyboard to focus on the design task at hand. The tablet successfully treads the line between graphics professional tool and daily computer input device.

At just under 1cm thick, the Z12 looks razor sharp on the desk. The main problem here is one that is common to many tablets and all wide-screen tablets: the footprint. While the Z12 has

less dead space around the active area and although it doesn't waste room with hardware keys, it's still takes up a good chunk on the desk.

Also, while Wacom tablets have a wireless pen that doesn't require batteries, Adesso's CyberTablet Z12 requires a AAA cell in its pen, adding a little to the weight and putting one more peripheral on your desk whose battery is sure to run out at the most inconvenient time.

By Andrew Moore-Crispin



Wacom Graphire Bluetooth 6 x 8 Tablet

Specifications

- Tablet Dimensions: 30.5cm x 25.4cm x .9cm
- Active area: 25.4cm x 15.9cm (10 x 6.25 inches)
- Pressure levels: 1,024
- Interface: USB
- Battery: 1xAAA in pen

System Requirements:

- PC or Mac running Windows
- Vista/XP/2000, Mac OSX or greater
- Powered USB port
- CD-ROM drive
- Colour monitor

Wacom Cintiq 21UX

www.wacom.com

Estimated price: \$3,000

Artists that work exclusively in the digital medium can purchase combined display/tablets like Wacom's Cintiq 21UX. This tablet allows users to sketch, mark-up, ink and paint directly on the virtual canvas. Where a traditional (and much cheaper) tablet allows users to freehand on a pad that translates their movements to the screen, the Cintiq 21UX goes a step further by laying the touch- and pressure-sensitive surface right on top of a 21.3-inch, high-resolution LCD monitor. At about \$3,000, these tablet displays have found a soft spot with web comic illustrators like Mike Krahulik of AppleGeeks (www.applegeeks.com) who can do all their drawing and inking right on the virtual page. Scott Adams, creator of the syndicated Dilbert comics, also uses a Cintiq in his craft.



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CoolerMaster Case 430w True Power

\$149) is a comfortable and cordless mouse that lets you fly through large documents and websites with fast speeds, thanks to its MicroGear Precision scroll wheel. For added convenience, this mouse offers extra buttons such as a thumb wheel on the side that lets you easily toggle between open applications and a dedicated search button that launches your favourite web or desktop search tool. Thanks to its rubber-coated sides and sculpted design, this ergonomic mouse also feels great to the touch.

4-in-1 gadget

Consider it the Swiss Army Knife of computer mice: Microsoft's Wireless Notebook Presenter Mouse 8000 (\$125; www.microsoft.ca) is the first notebook mouse that functions as a 2.4 GHz Bluetooth laser notebook mouse, slide presenter, laser and digital pointer and media remote control – all rolled into one. Therefore, you can use this mouse like any other or pick it up to click through a PowerPoint presentation (and use the laser pointer to highlight something on the slide) or to change songs in your music playlist up to 30 feet away from the PC. Also available is the Logitech Air Mouse (\$159), which can also be used on the desk and in the air – including wrist-based gesture commands to control your media from afar.

Thin is in

This falls into the "Why didn't I think of that?" category. The MoGo Mouse (US \$49; www.newtonperipherals.com) snaps inside the laptop's PC Card or ExpressCard slot, which stores and recharges it, and then can be used when popped out. These Bluetooth-based MoGo mice from Newton Peripherals also have a little "kick-stand" that flips open to elevate the credit card-sized peripheral for use. If your laptop doesn't have integrated Bluetooth, you can snap in a small USB receiver. The latest versions of the MoGo mice also offer wireless presenter functionality for boardrooms or media control to access your laptop's music, photos and videos.

Game on!

By partnering with celebrated PC peripheral company Razer, Microsoft has created a high-performance mouse for all your Windows games. Perfect for 3-D shooters, real-time strategy (RTS) games and role-playing games (RPGs), the Habu (\$84.95) is a "laser" mouse that offers incredible

precision (reading 2,000 dots per inch), high-speed motion detection, incredible comfort and programmable rubber-coated buttons. While it's a wired mouse for superior performance (and with a gold-plated USB connector), it actually feels like it's wireless thanks to the thin and flexible wire. You'll also love the glowing blue highlights for low-light, late night gaming sessions.

Blown away

Similar to its award-winning gaming controllers, the Nyko Air Flo Mouse (\$25; www.nyko.com) is a breeze to use – literally. That is, whether you're working, surfing the Net or playing PC games, this clever computer mouse blows cool air through tiny pores on its surface to keep you from overheating (with adjustable air flow intensity). While not

cordless, this ambidextrously-designed mouse for righties or lefties is quite comfortable, plus it works with both Windows and Macs and includes optional software to program commands to the buttons. "Cool" idea, no?

By Marc Saltzman

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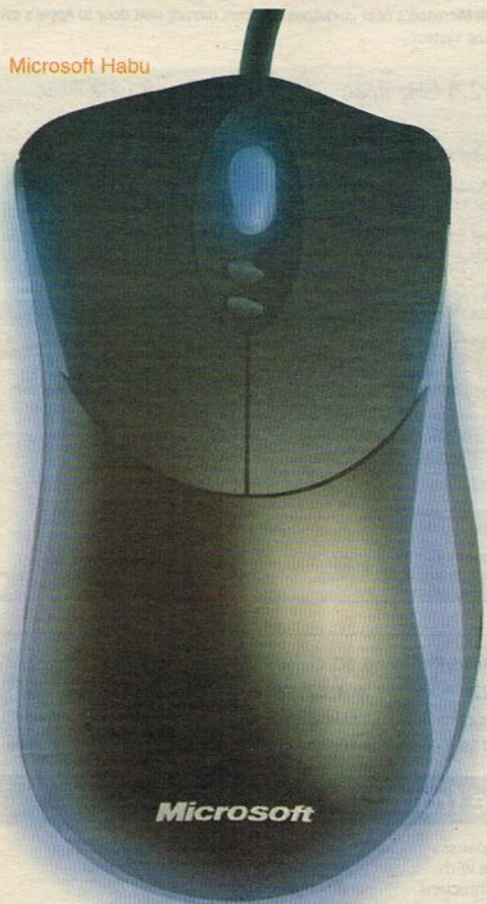
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These fine mice. (See how they click!)

Computer mice worth laying your hands on

Microsoft Habu



It's the most used, yet underappreciated technology you use: the computer mouse. Let's face it, your hand spends more time on this little piece of machinery than it does your steering wheel, TV remote, favourite beer...or dare we say it, your significant other.

So, why are you using the same 'ol mouse that shipped with your computer? It's like an audiophile who keeps the preinstalled factory deck in their car.

Tsk Tsk.

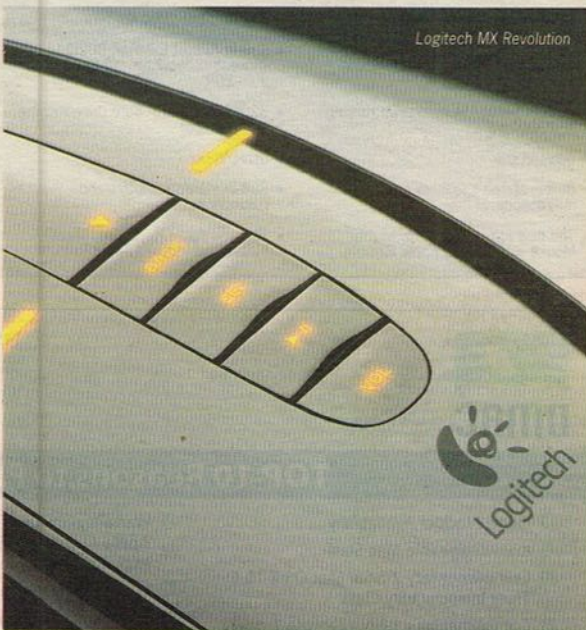
Whether you use your PC for work or

play, or a bit of both, we thought we'd highlight a few recommended peripherals worth laying your palm on. Some are straight-forward models, while others specialize in a particular function and a couple of the following are just plain strange.

You say you want a Revolution?

Winner of a CES (Consumer Electronics Show) Innovation award in the Design and Engineering category, the Logitech MX Revolution (www.logitech.com;

Logitech MX Revolution



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Digital photography tutorial

The business of photography

As you become more technically skilled and artistically developed as a photographer, the thought may occur to you one day: "Hey, maybe I can make some money at this!" And indeed, maybe you can. We live in a rich visual environment, and every photograph you see on TV, in a magazine or book or on the web was taken by somebody. The huge appetite for good photography is certainly there, but the other side of the coin is that the number of people trying to sell photography has also exploded.

One of the basic issues you will encounter if you try to sell your work is around copyright and permissions. As an amateur who takes pictures for your own enjoyment, you can generally take a picture of anything in a public place with few legal restrictions. The minute you put a price tag on your photo, your world changes. This applies to photographs of people as well as objects.

With people, one can see the reasoning behind it - it's a matter of personal privacy. Often people are delighted to see their picture appear somewhere, but consider this scenario. Suppose a manufacturer creates a magazine ad with a photo of your friends laughing to show how much fun using the product can be. But suppose that your friends happen to be dead set against this product - maybe they are animal rights activists and the company uses animals for testing their products, or maybe they are against child labour and the company's products are made in third-world sweat shops. There can be any number of reasons why you or any other person might resent the use of their image paired with a product - or in any other context that you haven't agreed to.

Now suppose that you were the photographer that sold the photo to the manufacturer. At the very least, you'll be on the outs with your friends. The company may be threatened with a lawsuit. Eventually, it will come back to you. The creative director that bought the photo from you might pointedly ask, "The contract says we only buy people pictures if there are signed model releases - where are your releases?" Then it dawns on you. You read the bit about model releases, and you thought, "They're my friends. If I'm lucky enough to sell the photo, I can ask them later." But of course, they are now your ex-friends, and you are left dangling in legal limbo.

In reality, this is unlikely to happen because agencies that buy photographs will make sure that all the legal work is complete. Another reason is that product photos are mostly staged, and all the people in them are paid actors. However, your photo might be purchased to use as a general illustration, and if there are people in it, it is generally good practice to ask them to sign a model release.

Photojournalism is a special case. If you sell a photo to a newspaper, you generally do not need permission if it's a breaking news event. For photo features where there is more time, the rules and procedures will vary with the publication. I know a staff photographer for a newspaper that will introduce himself and ask the subject for permission as a matter of courtesy.

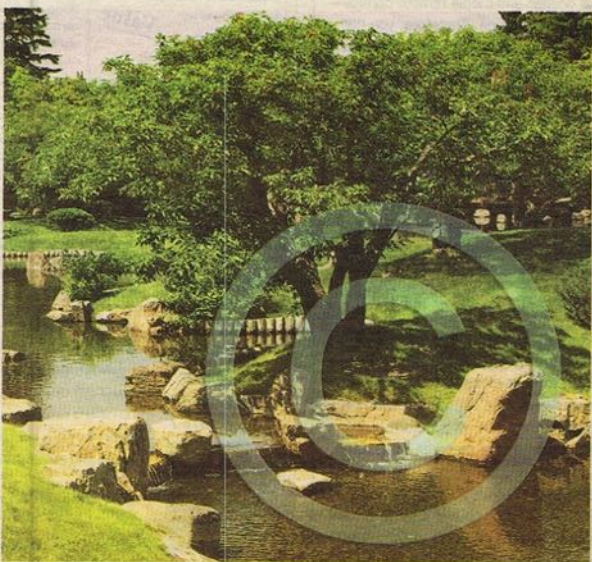
With objects and landmarks, you might think you are free from legal restrictions, but

try to sell a picture of the Eiffel Tower taken at night and you'll run into another legal issue. There is a copyright on the lighting effects that illuminate the tower at night, so you need to negotiate with the copyright holder before you can sell your photo.

Looking at it from the point of view of the photographer, you own the copyright to your photo, generally speaking. In Canada, the issue of intellectual property ownership is a bit cloudy when it comes to photography, and there are some situations such as "work for hire" contracts where the person that hired you to take the photos owns the copyright, not you. A bill to amend the Canadian Copyright Act was introduced in the last Parliament, but died when the session was dissolved.

In the spirit of sharing, and to circumvent some unevenness in copyright laws from country to country, people who participate in the Creative Commons are saying, in essence, "This is my photograph, but if you want to use it (usually for personal, non-commercial situations), you have my permission." That's an over-simplification, so if you are interested in Creative Commons, go to a site like Flickr where you'll find detailed information.

By David Tanaka



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Audio	5.1 Channel Digital Surround Sound		
Network	10/100/1000Base-TX LAN		
Media Case	Antec Fusion - Aluminum, Quiet, Fluorescent Display and Volume Control		
Desktop	Logitech Cordless Slim Keyboard and Mouse		
Ports	USB (front x2, rear x2) Firewire (front x1, rear x1)		
Device	Microsoft MCE Remote Control, TV Tuner Card		
Operating OS	Microsoft Windows Vista Home Premium		

\$829



A-Power Computer Recommends  Windows Vista



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Dual Core 1GB 80GB



\$579

Athlon64x2 2GB 250GB



\$999

Core2 Duo 2GB 250GB

E-300 Home Business Workstation

Processor	Intel® Pentium™ E2140 Dual Core
Memory	A-Data 1GB DDR2 667MHz
Motherboard	Asus P5GZ-MX S775 i945GZ
Hard Drive	WD 80GB SATAII 8MB (7200rpm)
Optical Drive	Samsung 18x Dual-Layer DVD Writer
Desktop	Logitech Deluxe 250 Keyboard & Mouse Desktop Combo
Speakers	Logitech S100 Speakers
Other	3D Video and Dolby Digital Audio, 17" Tower w/ 400W PSU

B-300a AMD Business Workstation

Processor	AMD® Athlon® 64 X2 5000+ EE
Memory	Kingston 2GB DDR2 667MHz
Motherboard	Asus M2A-VM AM2 AMD690G
Hard Drive	WD 250GB SATAII 16MB (7200rpm)
Optical Drive	Samsung 18x Dual-Layer DVD Writer
Desktop	Microsoft Value Keyboard & Mouse
Speakers	Logitech S100 Speakers
Case	Antec NSK4480 Micro ATX Tower
Other	Executive Class Installation & SysEval 1-year Express Replacement Warranty

G-200 For Competitive Performance

Processor	Intel® Core 2™ Duo E6550
Memory	OCZ Gold 2GB DDR2 Kit 800MHz
Motherboard	ASUS P5K S775 P35
Hard Drive	WD 250GB SATAII 16MB (7200rpm)
Optical Drive	Samsung 18x Dual-Layer DVD Writer
Graphics	EVGA E-GeForce 8600GTS 256M
Desktop	Microsoft Comfort Curve Keyboard & Mouse
Speakers	Genius 2.1 SW-42 1100 w/ Sub
Case	Antec Sonata III w/ Earthwatt 500W PSU
Other	3D Video and Dolby Digital Audio



\$649

HP Compaq 6515b (Model # RM184UT)

Processor	AMD® Sempron® 3500+
Memory	512MB DDR2 667MHz
Hard Drive	80GB SATA (5400 RPM)
Optical Drive	Combo DVD/CDRW SuperMulti
Graphics	ATI Radeon Xpress 1250
Weight	5.1 lbs
OS	Windows Vista Home Basic



\$759*

*After \$100 Mail-in Rebate
HP 530 Business (Model # GH641ATWABA)

Processor	Intel® Core Duo T2050
Memory	1GB DDR2 (2 x 512MB)
Hard Drive	80GB SATA (5400 RPM)
Optical Drive	DVD+RW
Graphics	Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 950
Weight	6.0 lbs
OS	Windows Vista Business



\$1329

ASUS F3T Series (Model # F3T-AP055C)

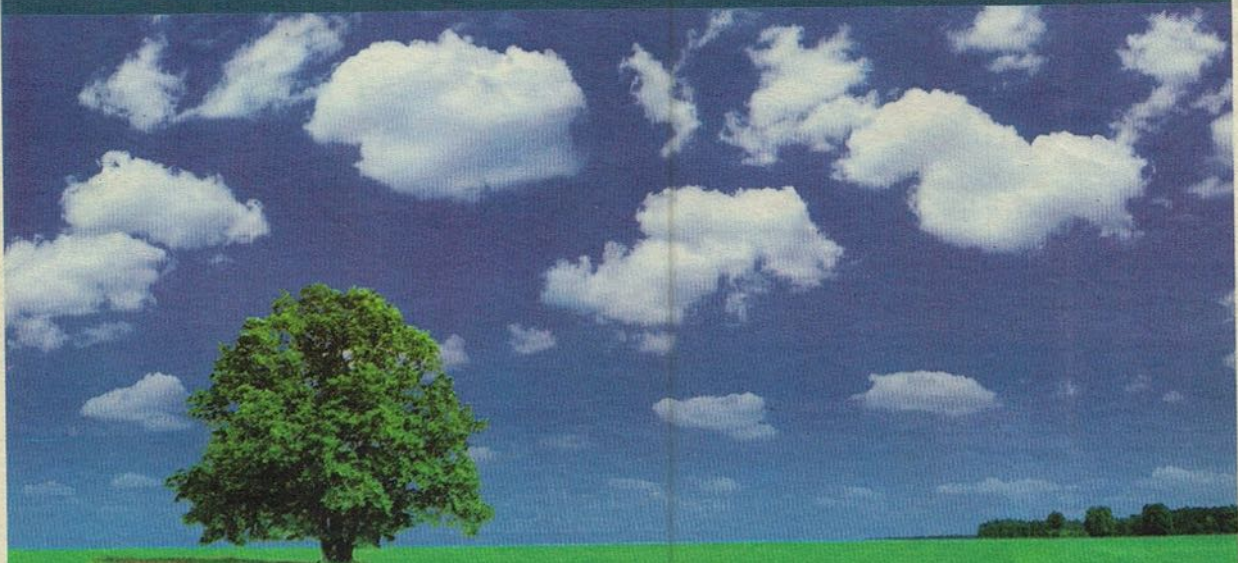
Processor	AMD® Turion™ 64 X2 TL-60
Memory	1GB DDR2 667MHz (1 x 1GB)
Hard Drive	160GB SATA (5400rpm)
Optical Drive	DVD+RW Super Multi
Graphics	NVIDIA GeForce Go 7600 256MB
Weight	6.0 lbs
OS	Windows Vista Home Premium
Other	1.3MP Webcam, 8-in-1 Card Reader

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The cutting edge of digital photo manipulation, management, colour correction and much more, Adobe Photoshop CS3 is the industry standard and a must for advanced amateur and prosumer digital photographers.

Offering an unprecedented level of control over your digital images, Adobe Photoshop CS3 builds on Photoshop CS2 with dozens of improvements. Users can boost their productivity with a streamlined interface, enhancements to raw-image processing and asset management workflows among other incredible improvements. Photoshop CS3 brings unrivalled editing power with non-destructive filters, more precise color-correction controls, and more powerful cloning and healing tools. Photoshop CS3 is built with photographers, graphic designers, Web designers, and print service providers in mind and is an indispensable tool for advanced amateurs to take their digital darkroom to the next level.

THE RULES: You must use a digital camera to capture the subject. Work can be submitted via email (contest@publishing.ca). Accompanying your photo should be the make and model of the camera you used, the names of any software you used to modify the image and, if possible, the f/stop and shutter speed you used to take the photo.

Submit your photographs, along with the information from the form below, by Oct 15, 2007. You can submit up to three photographs, all of which must be accompanied by a submission form. Entries must be submitted via email. Files should be no bigger than 500KB and no smaller than 300KB. One photo per email.

Prizes must be claimed by Nov 16, 2007. Winners must provide valid identification upon claiming prize. The prizes awarded are not transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash. To enter and to be eligible to win, persons must be residents of Canada, and not employees or be domiciled with an employee of Piccolo Publishing, its affiliate companies, or advertising or promotional agencies. The winners will be selected by HUB on Oct 19, 2007 from among all eligible entries received on or before contest close date. Winners will be contacted by telephone or email. In the event that they cannot be contacted within the first week following the contest, another entrant will be selected. All entries become the property of HUB and may be used in subsequent advertisements for the contest. All entries must be submitted by their artist and must be original work.

HUB's Photo Spree contest form. All submissions must contain this information. Send to contest@publishing.ca.

Deadline: October 15, 2007

Name:

Address:

E-Mail:

Phone Number:

Occupation/School:

Title of Entry:

Camera Used:

Software Used:

Mac or PC?

the S510 comes with a clever clear plastic 'carrier sheet' that folds over bigger or irregularly shaped materials so they can be easily scanned, as well. It will accommodate up to an 11 x 17 inch page but because you need to fold oversized paper in half, it wouldn't be suitable for historical papers. The resulting scan is stitched together into a seamless PDF.

A software-enabled setting called 'Setting for text only document' helps sharpen characters and lines while enhancing contrast, so it is handy for B&W documents.

The scanner's colour mode is best used when dealing with high quality photos or other colour documents, which the S510 does very well. Text and subtle detail, even with shaded colours, are all reproduced faithfully.

All the software that comes with the ScanSnap is another strong selling feature - you get several dedicated programs for specific functions and applications. Because the scanner works with PDFs, it means, of course, that Adobe Acrobat is required.

Version 8.0 Standard is bundled with the scanner, allowing for document mark-up, digital signatures and document security, among other things.

The ScanSnap Organizer has been enhanced for better organizing and viewing of PDF and JPEG files. It helps convert image PDFs to text-searchable files that you can use with self-defined keyword searches. Automatic indexing is supported.

Often listed last, but perhaps it should be first, is the bundled PFU CardMinder software. It helps manage the process of scanning both sides of a business card, with full indexing capability and a handy data export function for entering the data from a business card into popular contact management or email software. A new feature is a quick 'search and view' tool that displays the scanned file of any name entered into its search field.

ScanSnap's scanning engine is a CCD-based, cathode lamp duplex system. Its native 600 dpi element (interpolation to 1,200 dpi is possible) can be set to lower quality when appropriate, thus saving file size and increasing ppm (page per minute) capabilities.

Users should also be aware that some parts and supplies, called consumables, will be needed during regular operation. Extra carrier sheets, pad assemblies, pick rollers and the like should be replaced on a fixed basis (usually thousands of hours or thousands of scans, depending on the

part). Carrier sheets are priced around \$40; replacement hardwears parts are usually around \$20.

The S510 has a list price of \$595, an online price 100 bucks less, but that still may sound high for a 'just a scanner.' But the ScanSnap is much more than that. Its ability to turn personal or business documentation into searchable, editable files can be an invaluable advantage while we continue to wait for the truly paperless office.

By Lee Rickwood



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Digitized documents and wired workflows

Fujitsu ScanSnap S510: scanning and searching

Fujitsu Canada's ScanSnap S510 is high quality colour scanner with an integrated OCR (optical character recognition) program and a suite of related applications. It can be a powerful tool for business or personal use - although the price (\$595) and software suite aim this device more at the business/professional user. Documents like business cards, conference hand-

outs, printed contracts, hard copy spreadsheets and so on can be searched, edited, archived and managed as part of a document filing system. Personal documentation and mementoes such as photographs, travel documents, newspaper clippings, projects and more can be captured in a single pass.

The ScanSnap S510 is lightweight, compact and easy to use. You can use one of the software tools that's included with the scanner, or simply use the quick-start button located on the front panel of the unit for one-off scans. Its resultant scanned output file is either PDF or JPG. All files can have user-specified file names, password protection or specified-use options.

The 600 dpi, sheet-fed USB device scans in colour or black-and-white. It can scan and send documents - whether single or double sided - as email; it can scan and export them to MS Office programs like Word, Excel and PowerPoint with OCR or it can perform other scanning and archiving tasks on printed documents, graphic images or photographs up to legal size (8.5 x 14 inches). The S510 is Vista-compatible; it's the new older brother to the S500 XP version. Mac versions of the ScanSnap are also available.

The S510 can hold up to 50 sheets at a time in its automatic feeder. In 99 percent of cases, it performs flawlessly, with no misfeeds or paper jams. For large or odd-size documents,

S510 Specifications

Scanner type

- ADF (Automatic Document Feeder)

- Duplex colour scanning

Scan modes

- Colour/Black & White/Automatic (colour/black & white detection)

Image sensor

- Dual colour CCDs (Charged Coupled Device)

Light source

- White cold cathode discharge lamp

Scanning speed

- Normal mode (duplex/simplex, colour 150 dpi, black & white 300 dpi): 18 ppm
- Better mode (duplex/simplex, colour 200 dpi, black & white 400 dpi): 12 ppm
- Best mode (duplex/simplex, colour 300 dpi, black & white 600 dpi): 6 ppm
- Excellent mode (duplex / simplex, colour 600 dpi, black & white 1200 dpi): 0.6 ppm

Scanning range

- Letter, Legal, Business card, A4, A5, A6, B5, B6, custom sizes (up to 10 custom sizes can be defined), automatic paper size detection.
- Use of a ScanSnap Carrier Sheet permits the scanning of 11 x 17 inches and photographs as well as other sizes not listed above.

Paper weight

- 14 to 34 lb.

Paper chute capacity

- Maximum 50 sheets (Letter, 20 lb.)

Interface

- USB 2.0 (USB 1.1 compatible)

Driver

- ScanSnap Manager (TWAIN/ISIS not supported)

Output formats

- PDF or JPEG

Dimensions (W x D x H)

- 284 mm x 157 mm x 158 mm (11.2 x 6.2 x 6.2 inches)

Device Weight

- 2.7 kg (5.9 lb.)

Environmental Standards Compliance

- ENERGY STAR
- RoHS

System Requirements

ScanSnap S510

- Intel Pentium III 600 MHz or higher
- Intel Pentium 4 1.80 GHz or higher recommended
- 256MB or higher (with Windows Vista: 512MB or higher)
- 512MB or higher recommended
- 1.74GB free disc space
- CD-ROM drive
- Available USB 1.1, USB 2.0 recommended



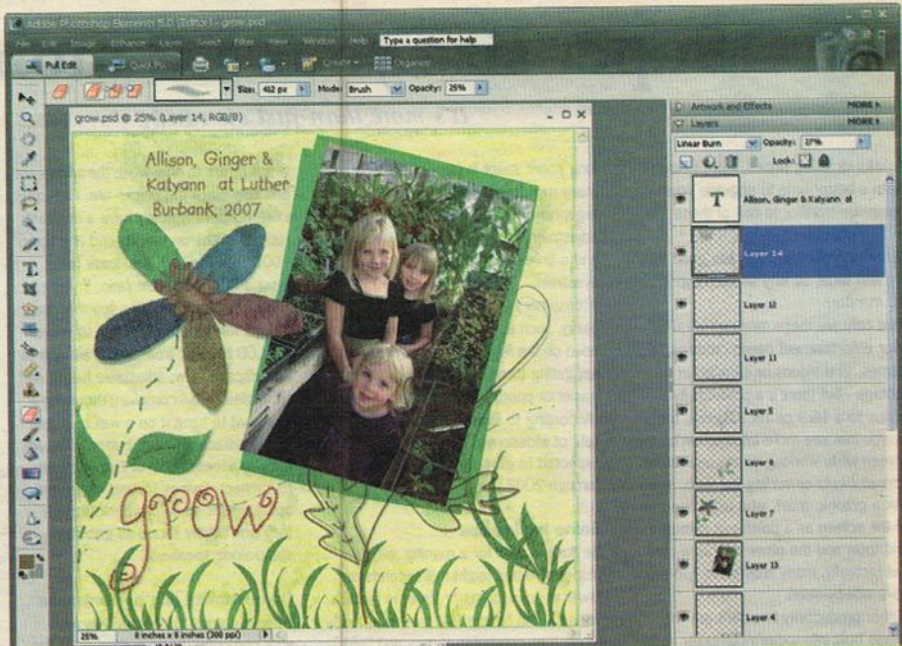
Started button to begin. Click the Start with a theme option and choose a theme that you like from those shown. You can then select a different layout for that particular theme, and click Done to continue.

To add your own photos, click the Photos link on the left of the page and click Get Photos. Choose to upload photos from your computer, or to grab photos you have stored online at PhotoBucket, Yahoo Photos, Flickr, WebShots or Facebook. When the photos appear on the site, you can drag them onto the page to replace the photos in the sample layout.

Add text to a page by clicking the Text & Balloons option and select the text to add. You can also change the page background, and add stickers and other elements from the collections down the left of the page to decorate your page. When you're done, click Save. At this stage, you must create a free account to save your file. When you are done, you can view your pages online or save them to your computer as JPG images that you can then print.

Scrapbook pages can also be created using special scrapbooking software, or indeed, any graphics program. To create a page in Photoshop Elements, create a document the size of the page that you want to print at 300 dpi resolution. Open the photos to use, drag and drop them onto the page and size and position them as desired. Add text for a title and more text for your journaling. To finish the page, you can download digital backgrounds and elements from the web. There are lots of sites that offer free and fee-based downloadable digital scrapbook papers and embellishments. One place to look is Scrapbookflair.com, which offers free downloadable scrapbook kits that include backgrounds and decorative embellishments. In general, kits cost a few dollars each with many being free. Other places to find free and for fee elements include digiscrapdepot.com and cottagearts.net.

There are lots of downloadable embellishments and a series of handy Photoshop tutorials explaining how to create digital scrapbooking elements at eScrapplers.com. Downloadable elements available here include alphabets, tags, screws, rivets, punched shapes, paperclips, paint chips and other popular embellishments you can use as-is or recolor to match your page design. Download and unzip the embellishments, open them in Photoshop Elements and drag and drop them onto your page. Take care to include your



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By Helen Bradley

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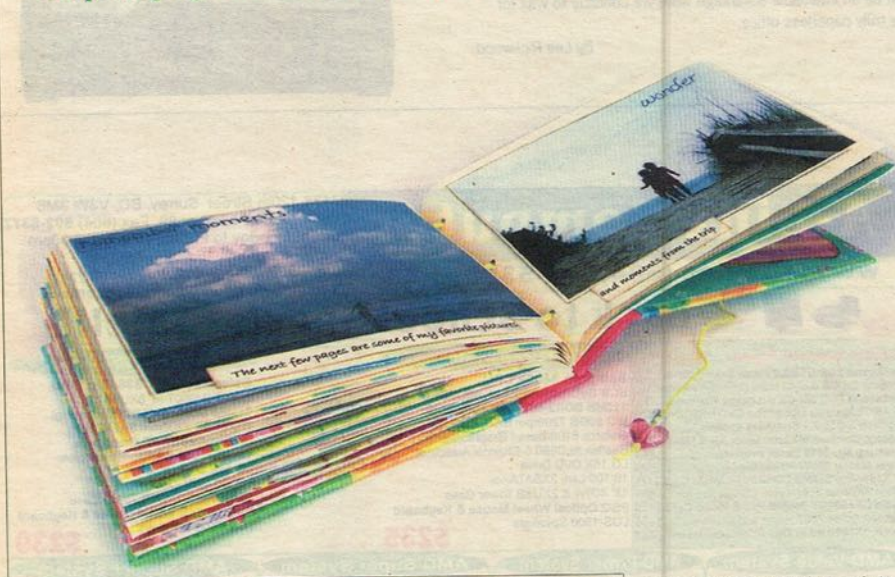
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Scrapbooking 101

Graphics programs and web resources lend a digital hand in the celebration of family memorabilia.



ing and this has grown with the advent of digital photography.

As people started scrapbooking in earnest, it wasn't long before some who scrapbooked using paper and scissors turned to the computer for help. Word processors and later desktop publishing software, specialized scrapbooking software and virtually any graphics software title were put to work typing and printing text to record the stories being told in the photos.

However, intrepid scrapbookers didn't stop there. Nowadays, there is an ever increasing group of scrapbookers who use their computers to create both 100 percent digital pages and what they call hybrid pages - a combination of digital and paper techniques.

A scrapbook page incorporates a few distinct elements. Typically, it includes a photograph or item of memorabilia as its focal point. This is placed on a background, which might be a solid piece of cardstock or some patterned paper.

The page will have a title to introduce it, some text or journaling that describes the story being told in the photos and some embellishments to decorate it. Finished scrapbooks are mini pieces of art that chronicle the events in our families' lives.

To get an instant start in digital scrapbooking, visit the online scrapbooking tool Scrapblog.com. You don't need to sign up until you're ready to save something, so click the Get

Do you keep a scrapbook or a photo album? Chances are that you have at some point in your life. Scrapbooks and photograph albums help us record the details of our lives, from the photos we take to the things we see and do to the memorabilia we collect.

People have been creating albums and scrapbooks for as long as they've been collecting memorabilia and photographs. In the late 1990s, scrapbooking started to develop a cult-like follow-



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Core2Duo E4400 2G.....\$375ASUS P5VD2-MX Motherboard
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Video Sound Lan on Board
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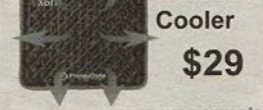
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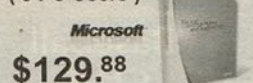
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Super-size your PC monitor

It's more than just eye-candy

Thanks to falling prices, there's never been a better time to upgrade your computer monitor to one of those thin, wide and larger models.

After all, your television has gone thin, big and wide, so why shouldn't your PC monitor?

Not only are these monitors ideal for your entertainment needs - movies, games, viral videos or camcorder footage - but there's a productivity bonus to a 16:9 or 16:10 panel, too, as you can see more information on the screen while working on documents or spreadsheets or surfing the Web. Just ask a graphic artist, who uses one side of the screen as a palette of colours and tools and the other side as a canvas (actually, many artists use two monitors side-by-side!).

Other productivity boosters are the extras built into today's computer monitors. For example, the ViewSonic VX2255wmb (\$449) is a beautiful 22-inch display that offers a built-in 1.3 megapixel webcam and microphone that allows users to easily conduct VoIP or video conferences. Also, for the

long hours spent in front of the screen, many monitors have a variety of ergonomic features, including height adjustment and 360-degree swivel, and a bright screen to help reduce eyestrain.

Consumers, too, can multitask more easily, such as having an email window open on the left side of the screen while navigating through your favourite music tracks or photos to the right.

According to Evans Research, the sale of widescreen PC monitors is expected to grow by triple-digit rates through 2008.

Some buying tips

Be sure to look for a monitor with low response times (eight milliseconds or lower is good; 5 ms or lower is fantastic) so it can handle fast motion smoothly, such as computer games and DVD movies. Otherwise, a flat-panel LCD monitor with a refresh rate of, say, 20, may not look as good as you may notice "ghosting" (trails) following a fast-moving object.

Another consideration is contrast ratio,

which refers to how white the whites are and how black the blacks are. Flat-panel LCD monitors typically have a contrast ratio of 300:1 on the low-end and up to 2000:1 on the high-end. Look for at least a 700:1 contrast ratio, if you can.

Other bells and whistles you may want to look for include the ability to swivel the LCD monitor from a portrait view to a landscape view; adjustable height and tilt angles; VESA-compliant mounting if you want to hang it on a wall or mount it to a retractable arm; buttons that are easy to access; USB or FireWire ports to connect devices to; and integrated speakers for audio playback (though they won't likely sound as good as stand-alone speakers).

Compatibility and performance

When it comes to compatibility with your computer, keep in mind most flat-panel monitors offer an analog "VGA" input port (three rows of five holes), while some offer both an analog connection and a digital "DVI" input port (usually white, with three rows of eight holes). If your video card offers digital

output, and your new monitor gives you this option, go with this instead of analog for higher video quality (though some argue the difference is negligible).

Finally, for the best performance, you should make sure your computer has the proper software programs, or drivers. That is, sometimes you can connect the monitor and voila - the picture will look great - while in other cases, you may need to insert the CD that shipped with it or visit the manufacturer's website to download related files. If the images on the screen look stretched and unnatural after you've updated the drivers, try adjusting the (Windows) computer's resolution by pointing your mouse anywhere on the blank desktop, right-clicking the mouse and selecting "Properties," and then "Settings" (in Windows XP) or right-clicking on the desktop and choosing "Personalize," then "Display Settings" (in Windows Vista). You might need to tweak the size of the icons and text to suit your preference.

By Marc Saltzman



ViewSonic VX2255

Express Card combining NTSC (analog) and ATSC (digital) TV capabilities into one tuner. For less than \$150, users can watch (and record) over-the-air analog or HDTV on a laptop. The card supports up to 1080i signals in aspect ratios of 4:3 and 16:9.

Pinnacle Systems offers its PCTV HD Stick, available online for less than \$100. This dongle-sized device delivers regular analog TV, full spec HD and even Internet radio via a USB port to a Windows (there is also a Mac version) machine for viewing or recording. It comes with its own mini-antenna, so moments after set-up, you can be watching available HD channels on your notebook or desktop.

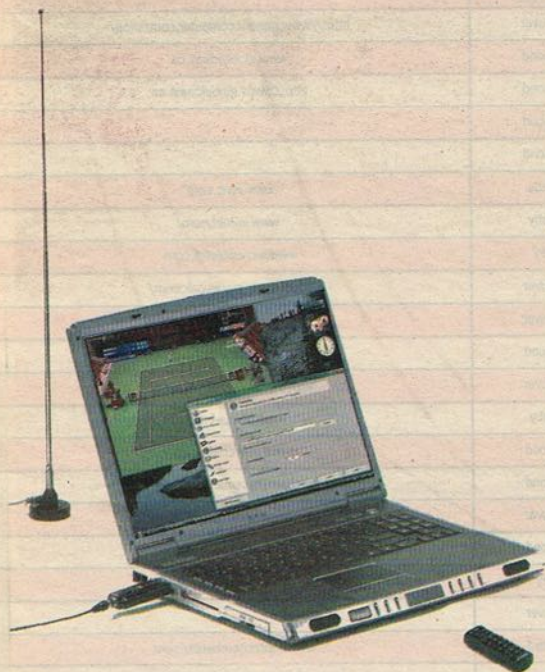
In my case, the stylish little gadget found some 11 different HD channels – including both Canadian and U.S. border stations – with just a simple auto scan once connected to my Vista ultra-portable. Watching a football game on both my standard definition 4:3 home TV and on my 16:9 high definition notebook display clearly showed the dramatic difference in viewing experiences. The HD picture was remarkably crisp and detailed; the wider aspect ratio showed much more image content and context (especially in sports - this makes a world of difference for the viewer); even the PC sound had greater apparent fidelity and separation (through stereo headsets) than the TV.

With its time-shifting capabilities, TV pause, FF, rewind and a downloadable electronic program guide, the PCTV Stick turns a PC into a PVR (personal video recorder), with the option of recording direct to hard drive or to DVD included in the software. Lots of space (a minimum 20GB to start) is required for recording HDTV. Trimming and basic editing of recorded material is supported.

Several other companies offer HD/PCTV solutions via a USB device, including Hauppauge with its WinTV, Elgato and its EyeTV and others. Depending on your existing platform (Mac or PC) and its current configuration, you may be ready to watch HD faster and easier with your PC than with your TV!

By Lee Rickwood

Lee Rickwood is a freelance writer and independent video producer. He operates Word On A Wire, an independent company providing editorial, media production and consulting services to individuals and companies across North America. He can be reached at videodaze@goodmedia.com.



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DV or Not DV

Watching high definition video on a PC

As we've discussed here before, anyone without the right combination of HD delivery services, HD display screens and/or HD playback devices could be in for an unpleasant surprise. Sometimes, simply having the right cables can make or break an HDTV viewing experience.

Watching HDTV on a personal computer hasn't been that much different. The right mix of processing power, audio/video codecs, graphic cards, source media and other hardware and software products have always been necessary to get the best performance.

But integrated solutions and the long-promised convergence between the TV and PC are now arriving. New computer-based tools for HDTV playback and recording are available for the Windows PC and Apple's Mac, in desktop as well as portable configurations.

For example, a big advance is the H.264 codec that makes it possible to play high-definition video on a PC (Mac or Windows) without additional hardware.

Already ratified as part of the internationally accepted MPEG-4 standard (MPEG-4 Part 10) and the latest

videoconferencing standard, H.264 is now mandatory for HD-DVD and Blu-ray (the two formats for high-definition DVDs) as well. It's also been ratified as the DVB (Digital Video Broadcasting) and 3GPP (3rd Generation Partnership Project) standard of choice.

The need for a powerful codec (for compressing and decompressing video) like H.264 is unavoidable – there is simply too much data in a video stream (not to mention a high definition video stream) for a computer to handle properly without robust compression tools that can "squeeze" or "zip" that data somehow. H.264 delivers the same high quality as MPEG-2 at a third to half the data rate, and up to four times the frame size of MPEG-4 Part 2 at the same data rate.

You still need a recent model computer with a powerful configuration, but it is possible to play back full spec HD (1080p) on an Apple G5 or equivalent Windows system. The more powerful the system, the better the playback experience it can deliver.

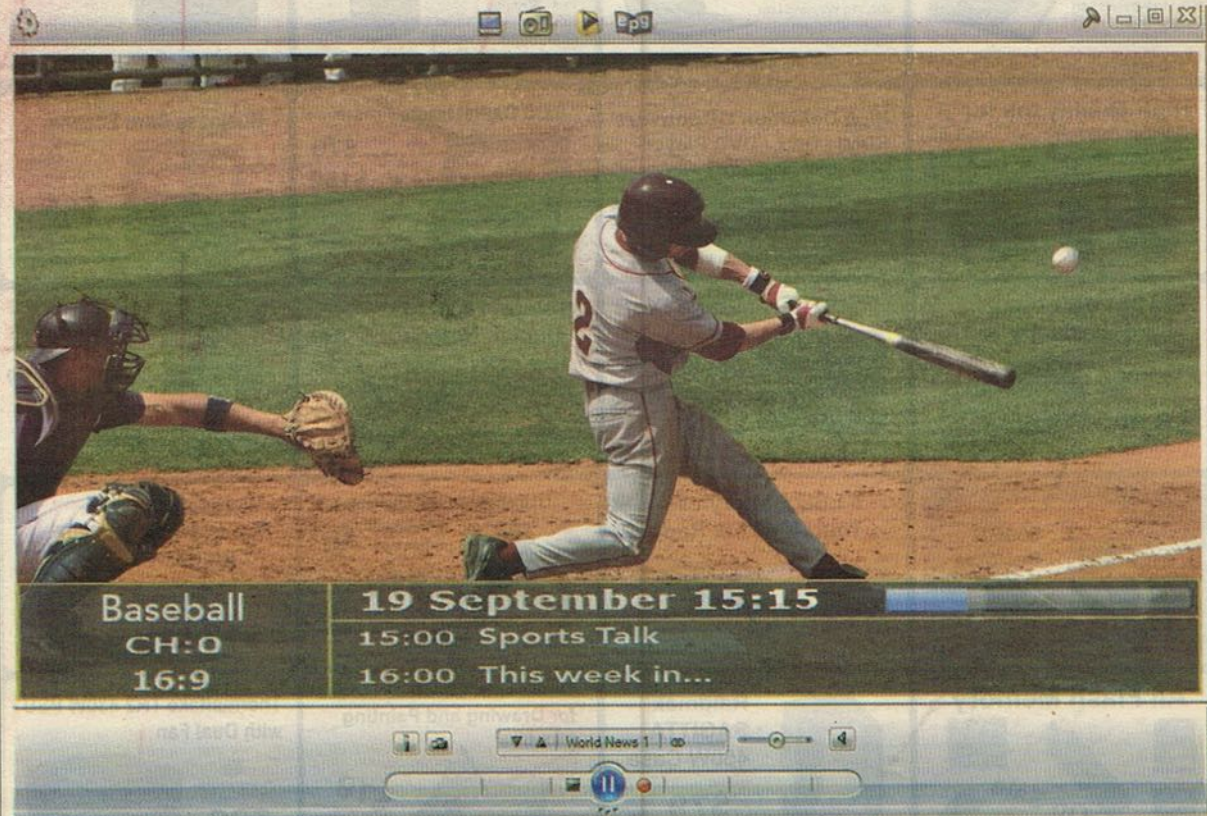
For example, QuickTime (H.264) manufacturer specs indicate that a minimum configuration for playing 1920

x 1080 (1080p) video at 24 frames per second (note: that's not 30 frames, but 24) is a dual 2.0 GHz G5 or faster Mac or 2.0 GHz Intel Core Duo or faster; at least 512MB RAM; and a 128MB graphics card. For Windows, the requirements are even greater: a 3.0 GHz Pentium D (Dual Core) processor or faster; 1GB RAM; and at least a 64MB graphics card.

High definition video playback on a PC (with Windows Media Player 9 series or higher) requires a 3.0 GHz processor, 512 MB RAM and a 128 MB graphics card. Of course, in both situations, a suitable screen (1920 x 1440 resolution, for example) and a multi-channel sound card (24-bit, 96 kHz) are recommended.

All that is just for HD content you have in hand; a DVD or digital file, for example. For HD viewing over-the-air or via cable, there are some cool new computer-based products with tuners, antennas, program guides, recording and file management systems built in.

AverMedia has just released its new hybrid High Definition and Analog ExpressCard TV Tuner for Windows laptops. The AVerTV is a certified 54mm



Screenshot from Pinnacle Systems' PCTV HD Stick

Simple, secure, sexy

SanDisk Cruzers for work and play

SanDisk Cruiser Contour



The latest line of USB keys from the flash memory wizards at SanDisk comes in three flavours: Contour, Professional and Enterprise. The Contour is the consumer version, meant for techno hipsters who want a lot of storage—it comes in 4GB (\$100) and 8GB (\$205) models—and a chic geek form factor. Featuring a brushed metal case with a piano black accent, the Contour's USB jack is revealed by pressing down on the top of the key and sliding it towards the base. Push it up again and the jack pops out and locks firmly into place. It's the same sort of smooth, nerdy-cool motion that users of sliding mobiles and flip phones tend to become obsessed with (don't be surprised if you find yourself playing with the key in your pocket).

Like many newer flash drives, the Contour is enhanced for Windows Vista ReadyBoost, which means you can speed up your system using the drive's memory while it's plugged into your PC. It also employs SanDisk's U3 technology, which allows users to store programs like Skype and Winamp on the key and access them on any computer at hand without moving them to the hard drive.

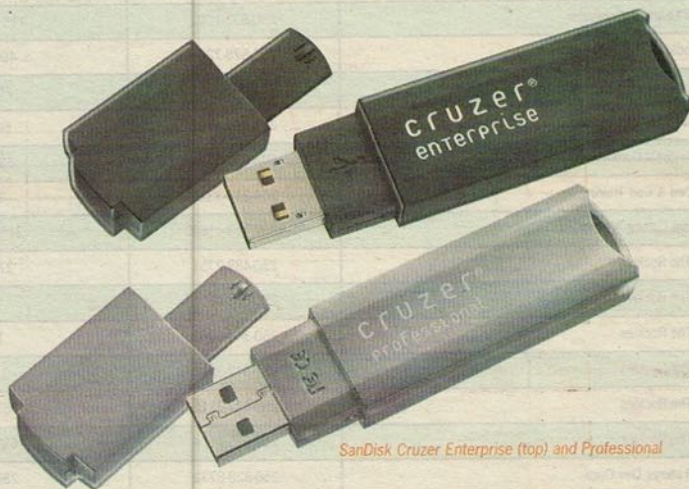
The Professional (available in 1GB, 2GB and 4GB models starting at \$59) is designed for mobile business types and sports a fittingly conservative

aesthetic: it's a simple, gray, rectangular piece of plastic with a pen-like clip cap. While the Professional can't match the Contour's sexy curves and materials, it offers a heightened degree of security—via 256-bit AES encryption—and a customizable private partition. Users can set the size of the partition and create their own passwords using a simple SanDisk app called CruiserPro.

It takes just a few seconds to set up, and you can designate frequently used PCs to automatically bypass the login so that you need not waste your time entering a password every time the key is plugged into your home or work machine.

On the surface, the Enterprise is nearly identical to the Professional (it's black instead of gray and is available in the same capacities), but it comes with an even more secure software package designed to make IT department heads fret a little less when their company's more careless staff drop their USB keys in the parking lot. Passwords combining digits with upper and lowercase letters are mandatory and must be re-entered each time the key is plugged in. It's a bit of a nuisance, and the additional security jacks up the price—the 1GB model goes for \$80, while the 4GB is a whopping \$195—but companies with secrets to protect may be willing to pay a premium and weather a few password-related complaints from employees in exchange for the Enterprise's virtually unassailable data protection.

By Chad Sapieha



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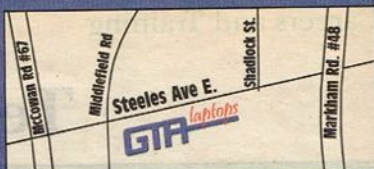
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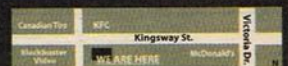
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Okanagan University College	250-498-6264	9315 350Th Ave	Oliver
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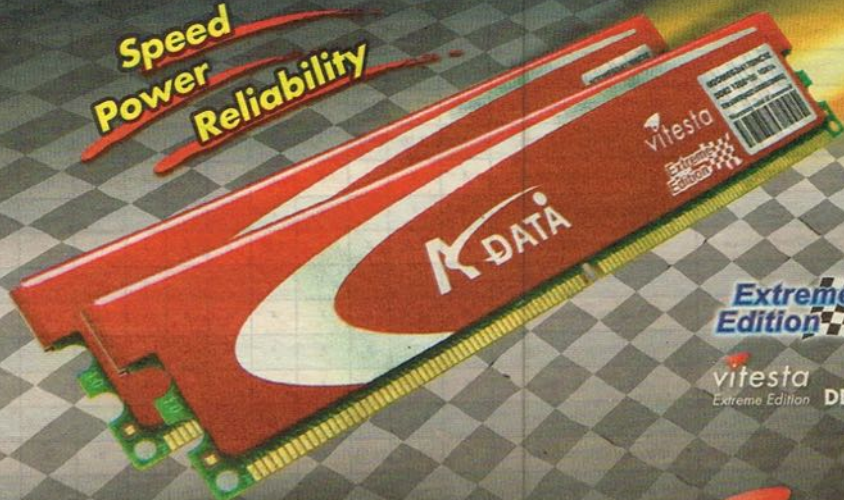
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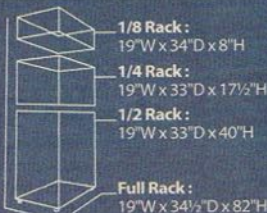
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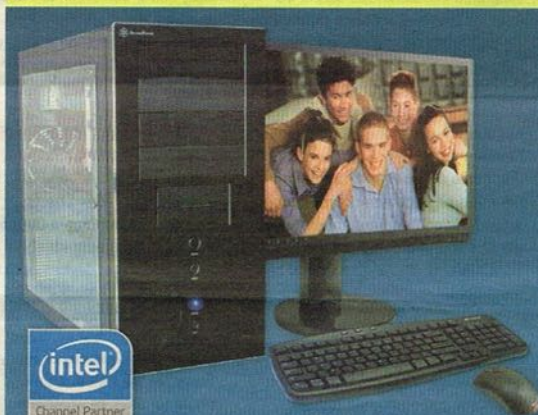
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Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter 2

Name is the only thing this PC exclusive has in common with its console forerunner.

Publisher: **Ubisoft**
Developer: **Ubisoft**
ESRB rating: **Teen**
Score: **3.5/5**
Reviewed on: **Windows PC (Running on a Windows Vista box with a 3.0 GHz Intel Dual Core processor, 2GB of RAM, and a 512MB ATI Radeon X1900 XT graphics card; displayed at 1920x1200 on a Dell 2407FPW 24-inch LCD.)**

PC shooter lovers have been getting the shaft over the last few years as recent entries in many of their favourite Windows-born franchises have been designed for consoles, then ported without much thought or care to their platform of choice. But with Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter 2, Ubisoft decided to give PC players exactly what they wanted: a game designed from the ground up to played

on a computer.

Hold on, some astute readers are saying, GRAW2 was originally developed for and released on the Xbox 360 last spring. True, but other than a similar concept and some shared dialogue, virtually everything about the PC version is different from the console edition. Of course, we still have access to the franchise's signature futuristic military goodies, including a powerful, networked heads-up display that shows the location of any enemies spotted by your squad, and the ability to dictate the movements and actions of your high-tech teammates has come through the transition mostly unchanged, but everything else—maps, missions and interface—is entirely new.

The revamp makes the PC release far more challenging than the Xbox 360 edition, which allowed skilled players to treat the game as a run 'n' gun shooter. Enemy AI in the PC version is impres-

sive almost to a fault, capable of picking off both you and your computer controlled teammates like fish in a barrel if you're unlucky enough to get caught in the open. And while well honed keyboard and mouse skills will serve veteran players well (especially in delivering quick, potentially life-saving orders to their squads), prudence and carefully planned strategy are the real keys to GRAW2. Indeed, winning is all but impossible without first scrutinizing the tactical map and then continually setting strategic waypoints in well covered areas.

In fact, the revamped PC play might be a bit too taxing in some places. The greatest criticism to be levelled at GRAW2 is that it's one of the most punishing games around. Masochists will be right at home as they play most missions a dozen times over, but less resilient players may quit out of sheer frustration. It's a good thing that, in my

experience, PC gamers are generally a hardcore lot.

By Chad Sapieha

System Requirements

Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter 2

- 2 GHz Pentium IV or AMD Athalon (2.8 GHz Pentium IV or AMD Athalon recommended)
- 1GB RAM
- 128MB DirectX 9.0c/ Shader Model 2.0 compliant (256MB recommended)
- DirectX 9.0c compliant sound card
- 4x or faster DVD-ROM
- 5GB hard drive space

Sid Meier's Civilization IV: Beyond the Sword

A nearly flawless strategy game edges closer to perfection.

Publisher: **2K Games**
Developer: **Firaxis Games**
ESRB Rating: **Everyone**
Score: **4/5**
Reviewed on: **Windows PC (Running on a Windows Vista box with a 3.0 GHz Intel Dual Core processor, 2GB of RAM, and a 512MB ATI Radeon X1900 XT graphics card; displayed at 1920x1200 on a Dell 2407FPW 24-inch LCD.)**

Damn you, Sid Meier. Lord knows what great deeds I could have accomplished with the hundreds of hours you have ruthlessly sucked from my life with your Civilization games. And now you unleash this: Civilization IV: Beyond the Sword, what Firaxis is calling the biggest expansion ever to be released for a Civ game.

For those of you who know not this addictive series, let me shed some light: Civilization games are turn-based strategy affairs in which a player takes

on the role of an historical world leader with the goal of rapidly building an empire. The process of developing a nation involves settlement of new lands, diplomatic dealings with neighbouring states, wars, religious and cultural revolutions and scientific advancement. The fourth game in the franchise added a fresh coat of paint to the proceedings with prettier graphics and deeper play that provided subtler methods of winning—like being the first empire to build a space shuttle.

This, the second expansion to Civ IV, makes no changes to the game's core engine, but instead concentrates on providing new and different ways to play. New leaders, units, scenarios and mods—obligatory elements of all Civilization expansions—allow players to look at what is essentially the same game from a fresh angle. Some scenarios, like Charlemagne, are epic in scope and force players to be both master diplomats and cunning military leaders, while others, such as Civ Defense, are

simpler and more arcade-like in nature, requiring players to do naught but protect their territory as efficiently as possible against increasingly deadly waves of attackers. And then there are the mods, which change the game wholesale. Final Frontier, for example, swaps the setting of Earth for a galaxy full of solar systems and introduces a whole new set of units and research.

Other additions include: random events ranging from natural disasters to diplomatic fiascos that pop up throughout each game and wreak havoc on well planned nations; improved espionage abilities that allow players to keep tabs on their neighbours' doings; and a new corporations element in which companies are founded, grow and eventually provide strategic resource benefits to their home nations.

And that brings me back to cursing Sid Meier. I had so many grand aspirations for the fall months. I was going to take more time to exercise, prepare healthier food and start writing a book. These

plans (along with the similarly grand ambitions of millions of other gamers, I'm sure), have been effectively scuttled by this awful, massive, stunningly beautiful expansion. I hope you can live with yourself, Mr. Meier.

By Chad Sapieha

System Requirements

Sid Meier's Civilization IV: Beyond the Sword

- Windows 2000 (SP1 or higher), Windows XP (SP1 or higher), Windows Vista
- 1.2 GHz Intel Pentium 4 or AMD Athalon processor equivalent
- 256MB RAM
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Late last year, Microsoft released Windows Vista, which included many new, but unfortunately resource-heavy, technologies. A couple of months ago, Intel launched its latest revision to the Centrino Mobile brand (dubbed Santa Rosa), further alleviating the performance concerns surrounding Vista while also leveraging many of its most advanced functions. Around the same time, nVidia brought its new business-focused mobile GPUs to the market as

well. Not surprisingly, these new GPUs are completely compatible with the Santa Rosa chipset and are designed specifically for Windows Vista.

The great thing about the Quadro NVS Mobile series is that there is one available in every price category and all of them are based on the same architecture. What this means for the consumer is that while the various Quadro NVS GPUs have different performance levels, because they share the same DNA - they include the same major features. For example, if you're a CAD professional or 3D animator, it would be worth the additional cost of purchasing the high-end Quadro NVS 510M with 512MB of

dedicated video RAM. On the other hand, if you're only planning to use your notebook for word processing and spreadsheets, but still want to use nVidia's award-winning nView multi-display technology, it would be more cost effective to go with the entry-level Quadro NVS 110M with only 64MB of dedicated video RAM.

Regardless of which Quadro NVS you choose, you're going to get the same vivid graphics, functionality and features with the only noticeable difference being the clock speed and memory configurations. The following are some of the highlights present in all of the new mobile Quadro NVS GPUs.

Application Compatibility Testing and Unified Driver Architecture:

As with the previous generations of Quadro GPUs, nVidia has tested the Quadro NVS hardware and drivers with a wide array of today's leading business applications in order to ensure complete compatibility. The tested applications range from everyday software like McAfee Virus Scan and MS Office, to more specialized software like Hummingbird Exceed and Bloomberg. Furthermore, because the Quadro NVS uses nVidia's Unified Driver Architecture, continued compatibility and stability are assured with future updates (or at least, that's the intention).

PowerMizer 7.0:

PowerMizer is nVidia's trademark intelligent power management system that adaptively adjusts the GPU on the fly to reduce power consumption. Along with dynamically altering the GPU and memo-

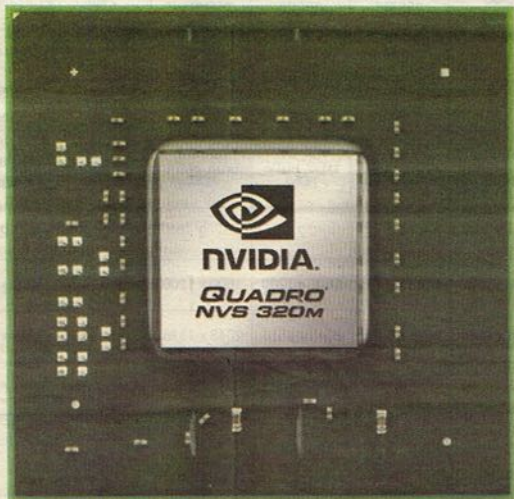
ry clocks, PowerMizer can also shut down inactive portions of the GPU to increase battery life. With other features like SmartDimmer (actively adjusts the screen brightness) and On-Chip Power "Watchdog" (circuitry dedicated to monitoring GPU utilization in order to throttle appropriately), the Quadro NVS Mobile GPUs offer much better battery life than previous generations.

DirectX10 and OpenGL 2.1 Optimization:

DirectX 10 is the graphics API used to power the more advanced visuals of Windows Vista. The entire Quadro NVS line of GPUs fully supports DX10 and Shader Model 4.0 to offer the most impressive graphics currently possible. Full support for OpenGL 2.1 ensures compatibility with a robust OS-independent graphics API as well as all OpenGL applications. Most of the visual improvements offered by DX10 and OGL2.1 are more noticeable in graphics heavy applications (3D animation software, CAD programs, video/photo editing), but the performance improvements when running things like AeroGlass in Windows Vista should be apparent to every type of user.

PureVideo HD:

Another important feature of the Quadro NVS series is the PureVideo HD video engine. PureVideo HD is a complete suite of hardware accelerated HD video decoders used to smooth, scale, de-interlace and colour correct HD video playback. H.264 and VC-1 (the codecs used by Blu-Ray and HD-DVD) are also supported to improve HD video disc





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